

4000

THE BOAT

by

WOLFGANG PETERSEN

based on the novel  
of the same name

by

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Of the 40.000 German U-boat men who served  
in World War II, 30.000 did not return.

La Rochelle, Occupied France, 1941.

# 1. UNDER WATER

Nothing for seconds on end, just cloudy gray-green water.  
Absolute silence.

## O p e n i n g      C r e d i t s

Soft, menacing music begins and gradually swells.  
A peculiar whirring, humming sound becomes audible.  
It draws nearer.

Then an eerie visual effect: a huge dull gray leviathan moves into CAMERA - a submarine. We can only distinguish vague shapes: main armament, conning tower, antiaircraft guns. The monster glides slowly past and disappears from view.

Silence again.

Abruptly, a dazzling flash rends the sea apart. We hear the murderous roar of an exploding depth charge. The water becomes a seething, swirling maelstrom.

## T i t l e :   T H E   B O A T

The sea subsides as water rushes back into the cavity displaced by the explosion.

Silence returns once more.

2. EXT LA ROCHELLE NIGHT

A winding coast road. A solitary car is speeding through the darkness. Narrow slits of light escape from shielded headlights. La Rochelle itself is blacked out.

Inside the car, three men. Beside the driver, the WAR CORRESPONDENT, 22, wearing naval lieutenant's uniform. The CAPTAIN, 30, commander of U96, handles the wheel with masterful insouciance. In back, brooding over a cigarette, sits the CHIEF ENGINEER, 27. Nobody speaks.

Suddenly the CAPTAIN brakes hard and skids to a halt with screaming tires. Dead ahead, in the middle of the road, stands a wildly gesticulating man. He pounds the hood with his fist.

BOSUN (in a drunken growl)

Watch it, you jerk!  
This isn't a speedway.

A pregnant pause. The WAR CORRESPONDENT glances at the CAPTAIN. The CAPTAIN slams the car into reverse so violently that the WAR CORRESPONDENT almost hits his head on the windshield. Then into first, a slalom turn, and away they go with another scream of tortured rubber.

CAPTAIN (calmly)

Our bosun. Blind drunk.

The car speeds on through the night, rounds a bend and brakes again. At least ten weaving figures are strung out across the road, all seamen in bell-bottoms. From each unbuttoned trouser-flap dangles a penis.

The CAPTAIN honks his horn and the rank divides. Slowly, with its windshield wipers on, the car crawls past a urinating honor guard.

The CAPTAIN accelerates away.

CAPTAIN

They call it fireboat drill.  
My boys, all of them.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT turns to gape at them over his shoulder. The CHIEF ENGINEER swears under his breath.

CAPTAIN (grinning)

You've got to make allowances.  
Last night ashore.

### 3. INT BAR ROYAL NIGHT

A milling throng of uniformed figures wreathed in tobacco smoke and liquor fumes. The atmosphere is frenetic.

MONIQUE, a full-bosomed and vivacious chanteuse, is belting out a lively number. Everyone hoots with delight at her bobbing breasts and buttocks.

(Note. The Bar Royal is a French-owned club requisitioned by Flotilla as an officers' recreation center. It boasts a miniature stage plus three-man band, frayed carpets, split leather armchairs, velvet drapes over the windows.)

The CAPTAIN, CHIEF ENGINEER and WAR CORRESPONDENT thread their way across the room. The CAPTAIN looks almost defiantly shabby in the midst of so much split-and-polish. He is wearing his oldest uniform jacket, and the ribbon of his Knight's Cross resembles a mangled bootlace.

The three new arrivals squeeze past a table at which hoarse voices are raised in song.

CAPTAIN

Merkel's boys. They're off  
tomorrow too.

Two members of Merkel's party rise and stagger out.

FIRST OFFICER (calling after them)

Mind you shove it up  
the right hole!

SECOND OFFICER

And don't forget to give  
her one from me!

CAPTAIN (to WAR CORRESPONDENT)

They only screw because they're  
scared. They need it like our  
fathers needed a schnapps in the  
first war, before they went over  
the top.

Further on, surrounded by a ring of spectators, an impish-looking youngster in his early twenties is poised in front of a table littered with bottles, glasses and ashtrays. He winds the tablecloth round his hands and braces himself.

SECOND LIEUTENANT

Wait for it... Hup!

He yanks the cloth away and everything crashes to the floor. Amid drunken laughter, he lands on his butt in a mess of spilt liquor and broken glass.

The laughter suddenly dies. The SECOND LIEUTENANT meets the CAPTAIN's eye. He scrambles up and stiffens to attention.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (blushing)

Sir!

CAPTAIN (dryly, to WAR CORRESPONDENT)

My junior watchkeeper.  
This is Lieutenant Werner.  
He's a war correspondent -  
he'll be joining us on this  
patrol.

(he winks)

And making a careful note of  
anything that catches his eye.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (taken aback)

W-welcome aboard, Lieutenant.

Meantime, MONIQUE is moaning "J'attendrai" into the microphone. She rotates her hips and goes through a crudely erotic routine with a bunch of feathers. The WAR CORRESPONDENT stands there slightly at a loss - the CAPTAIN and CHIEF ENGINEER have vanished into the hurly-burly. The SECOND LIEUTENANT takes him by the arm and steers him to a seat. In passing, he grabs the WAITRESS and cups his hand under one of her breasts.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (gleefully)

Some fruitcake! Must weigh  
all of five pounds.

The CAPTAIN props himself against the bar beside his CHIEF ENGINEER and smiles at NADINE, a pretty barmaid.

CAPTAIN

Two beers, Nadine.

He surveys the scene with detached amusement.

CAPTAIN

Where's Thomsen? I thought  
he'd be celebrating his new  
piece of hardware.

He taps his own Knight's Cross. Only now does he notice that the CHIEF ENGINEER is staring absently into space.

CAPTAIN (quietly)

Any news from Cologne?

CHIEF ENGINEER (shaking his head)

Couldn't get through. Private calls are banned till after ten.

CAPTAIN

I heard the radio earlier on. Bombing was confined to the city center. No hospitals hit.

The CHIEF ENGINEER nods, nervously chewing his lower lip.

FIRST LIEUTENANT (OFF)

Captain?

They both turn to face the FIRST LIEUTENANT of U96, a dapper young officer aged 22. He clicks his heels and salutes smartly.

FIRST LIEUTENANT

Reporting ashore from U96, Captain. Boat armed, provisioned and ready for sea.

CAPTAIN

Thank you, Number One.

FIRST LIEUTENANT

One more thing, Captain. On my way here I was molested by several members of the crew. They -

(positively trembling with anger)

it was outrageous - they -

CAPTAIN

All right, spit it out. They peed over you.

FIRST LIEUTENANT

Yessir.

CAPTAIN (grinning)

That makes two of us.



MONIQUE undulates between the tables, cooing at their occupants, and ends up on the lap of the WAR CORRESPONDENT, who is sitting with the SECOND LIEUTENANT. He blushes at her obscene gestures. The SECOND LIEUTENANT doubles up with laughter. MONIQUE turns and croons huskily in his ear.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (grimacing)

Phew, talk about a flame-thrower! She must have swallowed a whole string of garlic.

MONIQUE looks affronted and moves on.

SECOND LIEUTENANT

Prost, Lieutenant. Here's to Dönitz's private navy.

They drain their schnapps glasses. The WAR CORRESPONDENT gives an involuntary shudder. The SECOND LIEUTENANT eyes him with amusement.

SECOND LIEUTENANT

Your first trip in a U-boat?

WAR CORRESPONDENT (still wrestling with his schnapps)

Yes.

SECOND LIEUTENANT

Scared?

WAR CORRESPONDENT (smiling)

A bit. There's bound to be some excitement.

The SECOND LIEUTENANT giggles insanely, then leans over.

SECOND LIEUTENANT

Made your will yet?

WAR CORRESPONDENT

Eh?

SECOND LIEUTENANT

We lost thirty boats last month. Sunk with all hands.

(he grins)

How's that for excitement?

A scar-faced OFFICER mounts the stage, silences the band and takes over the microphone.

OFFICER

Just a minute. Your  
attention please!

He raises his glass towards the entrance.

OFFICER

Three cheers for our brand-new  
winner of the Knight's Cross,  
Lieutenant Thomsen. Hip-hip-  
hurrah!

(everyone joins in)

Hip-hip - hurrah! Hip-hip - hurrah!

THOMSEN, who has just come in, is half supported, half  
propelled along by his officers. He looks pale and  
emaciated - a human wreck.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (to WAR CORRESPONDENT)

That's Thomsen - one of the old  
gang. He brought his boat back  
this morning - crawled back on  
his hands and knees. This is  
the umpteenth time. No wonder  
he's smashed.

THOMSEN is standing in the middle of the room with a  
bottle of champagne in his hand.

THOMSEN

Quiet, everybody!

Silence falls.

THOMSEN (thickly)

To our illustrious and abstemious  
Führer, Adolf Hitler, the painter's  
apprentice who has so gloriously  
risen to become the greatest  
military leader of all time...

(he glares round the room)

Well, hasn't he?

The CAPTAIN steps forward and addresses him in a warning  
undertone.

CAPTAIN

Philipp!

THOMSEN

... the supreme naval strategist who  
it has pleased in his infinite wisdom -  
how does it go on?

(he emits a rolling belch)

Silence. The FIRST LIEUTENANT edges closer and subjects THOMSEN to an icy stare. Other officers are looking equally transfixed.

THOMSEN

Anyway, here's to the man  
who claims he can show that  
degenerate old bed-wetter,  
Winston Churchill, where to  
stuff his cigar!

Raucous laughter. THOMSEN knocks the top off his bottle with a knife. Champagne gushes out, and a river of froth flows down his jacket as he directs the jet into his mouth.

The men's room.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT is bent over a washbasin, sluicing his face. He examines himself in the mirror. He looks alarmingly pale and glassy-eyed. A barrage of noise and smoke assails him as he staggers back into the bar. He almost collides with the CHIEF ENGINEER, who is heading for the exit.

CHIEF ENGINEER (nervously)

See you in the morning. I've  
still got a phone call to make.

He is gone in a flash.

The piano on the stage has been commandeered by a party of youthful officers. One lieutenant pounds out a marching song while the rest bark the words.

The CAPTAIN is propped against the bar beside THOMSEN.

CAPTAIN

It's not the same old gang  
anymore, Philipp. These  
youngsters ... They're all  
wind and piss.

THOMSEN

I know - tight assholes  
and eyes burning with faith  
in the Führer...

CAPTAIN

Even they aren't as cocky  
as they were.

THOMSEN picks up his glass, takes a pull and relapses into apathy.

THOMSEN

Goddam torpedoes...

CAPTAIN

Many duds?

THOMSEN

Plenty. No accident, either.  
Sabotage, take my word for it.

(utterly dejected)

Any news of Kelsch?

CAPTAIN

Yes. Sunk off Gibraltar.  
The British reported it on Radio Calais.

(gruffly)

Not a good year for the old gang.

THOMSEN (staring into space)

The tide's turning.

He gives the CAPTAIN a bleary look.

THOMSEN

When are you off?

CAPTAIN

Tomorrow morning. Zero  
seven hundred.

THOMSEN

Med?

CAPTAIN (shakes his head)

Atlantic.

THOMSEN raises his glass with a tremulous hand. NADINE the barmaid sidles off. Unnoticed by either of them, she has been listening intently.

THOMSEN

Well, old son, give the  
British what for.

(swallows the rest of his brandy)

I'm off.

(he leers)

Got something lined up.

He staggers off. The CAPTAIN stares anxiously after him.

NADINE retires to the room behind the bar and draws the curtain. CAMERA peers through narrow chink. She is jotting something down...

Everyone in the bar looks thoroughly plastered. "Tiger Rag" is blaring from a phonograph.

A young OFFICER has jumped onto a table and is jerking his hips in time to the music - a genuinely stylish performance that earns him rapturous applause.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (lispig)

Hold me back, somebody, I'm  
beginning to fancy him!

MONIQUE almost explodes with laughter. The WAR CORRESPONDENT is looking more at a loss than ever.

MONIQUE is sprawled on his lap. Tickled by a pair of hairy hands, she shrieks and lashes out with her feet.

The SECOND LIEUTENANT promptly seizes a soda syphon and directs a jet between her thighs. MONIQUE squeals in outrage and sprints after the SECOND LIEUTENANT, who takes refuge on the stage. Tables and chairs go flying. A drunken young OFFICER pulls an automatic from his pocket and blithely fires it in the air.

The SECOND LIEUTENANT clammers up the ornamental trellis-work over the stage. It sags away from the wall and comes crashing down with the SECOND LIEUTENANT still aboard.

Screams, laughter, pandemonium. Shot after shot rings out. A mural above the stage depicts the Three Graces. The trigger-happy young OFFICER blows their faces to bits.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT totters feebly to the exit, head reeling. At the same moment, the door of the men's room opens to reveal the CAPTAIN. He spots the WAR CORRESPONDENT and beckons him over.

Inside the men's room, THOMSEN is lying in a pool of orange urine with vomit smeared on the floor beside his head. Bubbles issue from his lips as he tries to articulate. The CAPTAIN and WAR CORRESPONDENT grab hold of him.

CAPTAIN  
All right, on your feet.

THOMSEN (thickly)  
I was planning on a decent  
fuck, and now I'm past it....

CAPTAIN  
Never mind that, Philipp,  
come on.

THOMSEN  
Sieg heil!

The WAR CORRESPONDENT lets go, unable to take any more.  
The CAPTAIN half carries, half hauls THOMSEN outside.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT is deathly pale. He retches  
violently and slumps against the wall, panting, cooling  
his forehead on the tiles.

5. INT U-BOAT BUNKER DAY

A gigantic building. Riveting hammers clatter,  
oxyacetylene burners snarl, metal screeches against metal  
to create an inferno of sound. Dust and bluish vapor are  
pierced by the flash of welding equipment and the firework  
displays sent up by cutting torches.

Morning mist streams in through the huge lock gates that  
lead to the outside world.

The CAPTAIN, CHIEF ENGINEER and WAR CORRESPONDENT are  
trudging along a wide ramp. At right angles to it lie  
the U-boat pens, each separated from its neighbors by  
massive ferroconcrete partitions. One dry dock contains  
a submarine resembling a disemboweled whale. Dockyard  
workers are swarming over it like insects devouring a  
dead fish.

CAPTAIN (shouting above the din)  
Depth charges.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT stares in horror at the battered  
monster. Welding torches hiss, lighting up another badly  
damaged U-boat.

CAPTAIN  
Kramer's boat. Rammed by  
a sinking freighter.

They thread their way between stacks of sheet metal, tangled cables and truckloads of silvery torpedoes. Then they come to a flooded pen. It is far less noisy here - almost peaceful. They slacken their pace.

Long shot in the misty half-light: a long gray monster only just distinguishable from the oily water of the pen. We are looking at U96, "the" boat.

CAPTAIN

Ours.

He gives a wry grin, like a racehorse owner before the off. All three walk along the narrow quay. A pipe shrills and the CREW assemble on the casing.

The CAPTAIN teeters along the gangway, followed by the CHIEF ENGINEER and WAR CORRESPONDENT.

The FIRST LIEUTENANT comes to attention.

FIRST LIEUTENANT (crisply)

All hands on board, Captain.  
Main engines ready, boat  
secured for sea.

CAPTAIN

Thank you, Number One.

He turns to face his men - or rather, boys. Few of them look older than eighteen or twenty. They all gaze expectantly back.

CHIEF ENGINEER (whispering to the  
WAR CORRESPONDENT)

Now for his usual speech.

A lengthy pause. The CAPTAIN looks from face to face.

CAPTAIN (grins)

Well, all set?

CREW (a concerted bellow)

Aye-aye, sir!

Their voices reverberate round the walls.

CAPTAIN

Very good. Harbor stations!

The whistle shrills and everyone comes to life.

CHIEF ENGINEER (to WAR CORRESPONDENT)

Quite a speech, eh?

6. EXT      LA PALLICE (HARBOR OF LA ROCHELLE)      DAY

Long shot: slowly, almost majestically, U96 glides out of the cavernous bunker and into the misty light of day.

A first shocking glimpse of the bomb-blasted harbor: craters, ruined buildings, twisted railroad tracks, burnt-out boxcars.

Sentries armed with submachine-guns are patrolling the quays. French dockyard workers watch the submarine glide steadily out into the harbor basin.

U96's siren gives a series of muffled hoots: long- long-short - long.

7. EXT      BOAT/BRIDGE      DAY

The CAPTAIN is peering through binoculars. The WAR CORRESPONDENT stands beside him, shivering.

CAPTAIN

Are you the romantic type?

WAR CORRESPONDENT

I'm sorry?

The CAPTAIN hands over his binoculars.

CAPTAIN

See that empty building -  
there, next to the warehouse?

The WAR CORRESPONDENT looks through the binoculars. He sees a ruined house. A girl with long dark hair is standing at one of the gaping windows, waving.



CAPTAIN

Yours?

WAR CORRESPONDENT (smiling)

Not that I'm aware of.

He hands the glasses back.

WAR CORRESPONDENT

Isn't that area off-limits  
to civilians?

CAPTAIN (gruffly)

You bet it is.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT glances down at the men on the casing. Brisk activity - lines and wires are being coiled and stowed. The only motionless figure is that of Ensign ULLMANN. He is staring back at the ruined house.

# 8. EXT      LOCK      DAY

The wharf is crowded with dockyard workers, seamen, officers from Flotilla Headquarters, girls with armfuls of flowers. A brass band is blaring out the "Engellandlied."

U96 glides slowly past. Bunches of flowers sail through the air, movie cameras whirr, cheers ring out for the youthful "heroes" proudly drawn up on the casing, grinning, waving, looking devil-may-care.

The wharf recedes, the music fades.

A sudden commotion among the figures on the wharf: someone is elbowing his way to the force - THOMSEN. He raises both arms and yells so hard the veins in his neck stand out.

THOMSEN

G o o d   h u n t i n g !

The CAPTAIN waves back as casually as he knows how. He watches THOMSEN for a while. THOMSEN, too, stares after the boat. CAMERA lingers on his pallid face.

9. EXT      SEA / BOAT      DAY

Panoramic shot of the sea. U96 is gliding through the long swell, her bow cleaving the water like a plowshare.

Peace has descended - a striking contrast to the hectic bustle of La Pallice, which can still be seen in the distance. The mist has dispersed, and the whole of the eastern sky is becoming tinged with vivid red by the rising sun.

10. INT      BOAT / BOW COMPARTMENT      DAY

BOSUN LAMPRECHT pulls open the door of the bow compartment and the WAR CORRESPONDENT peers curiously inside.

BOSUN

The bow torpedo compartment.  
Sleeping quarters for twenty-one men.

The cavernous compartment resembles a looted storeroom. Leathers, hammocks, sacks of potatoes, slop pails, ropes, loaves of bread... Barely enough room for the swarm of men humping things around and stowing them away.

BOSUN (bellowing)

Crates of lettuce between the torpedo tubes? You must be joking - this isn't a vegetable store!

(to WAR CORRESPONDENT)

The fish are stowed and maintained here. It's the torpedomen's action station.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT takes some pictures. The MEN look up in surprise.

BOSUN

Say cheese, men. You're going to be in the papers.

A roar of laughter.

INT      BOAT/C.P.O.s' MESS, WARDROOM      DAY

BOSUN

The chief petty officers' mess comes next, then the wardroom.

Everything looks incredibly cramped.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT squeezes past MEN arranging their lockers or toting and stowing a variety of stores. An elbow prods him in the nose.

WAR CORRESPONDENT

So sorry!

He swings round and hits his head on a bulkhead. Somebody sniggers behind his back. Two men pause in their labors.

SCHWALLE

Who's he?

BOCKSTIEGEL (whispering)

A war correspondent. You're going to be famous, Schwalle.

11. INT BOAT / CONTROL ROOM DAY

The BOSUN plods through a compartment filled with pipes, valves, cables and handwheels - a bewildering maze of gauges and instruments.

BOSUN

The control room - what you might call the heart and brains of the boat.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT looks up with his mouth hanging open. Sausages have been lashed to the conduits and hams suspended from the deckhead.

12. INT BOAT / P.O.s' MESS, ENGINE ROOM DAY

The BOSUN steps neatly through a circular bulkhead doorway into the Petty Officers' Mess.

BOSUN

This is where the petty officers bunk. Sixteen of them.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT squeezes through the aperture into a minuscule compartment jam-packed with men. He gives them a friendly nod.

BOSUN

Two bodies to each bunk, turn and turn about. That means, when one man comes off watch he climbs into the other man's fug.

He gives a booming laugh and slaps an upper bunk with the flat of his hand.

BOSUN

Your berth, Lieutenant.  
You've got one all to yourself,  
being a guest on board.

PILGRIM, a cheeky little youngster from Cologne, heaves some oilskins and leathers onto the WAR CORRESPONDENT's bunk.

PILGRIM

Here, Lieutenant, these are  
yours.

A brawny P.O. tosses something else onto the bunk - a strange-looking item of equipment.

FRENSSEN (raucously)

Escape gear.

(he grins) Very important.

PILGRIM

It's only for show. They  
designed it for the Baltic.

FRENSSEN

Sure, but it comes in handy  
when the engines start smoking.

PILGRIM (indicating FRENSSEN)

Or when this bugger farts.

Horselaughs all round.

WAR CORRESPONDENT (bewildered but polite)

Thanks - thanks a lot.

He winces because the BOSUN has opened the bulkhead door leading to the engine-room. Bluish vapor and a diabolical din pour forth. JOHANN, the pale, gaunt engine-room C.P.O., is hovering over his diesels like a wraith.

BOSUN (yelling)

Well, Johann, everything  
nice and oily in here?

13. EXT        SEA / BOAT        DAY

Fall sunlight glistens on a deep blue sea flecked with white. The skyline is razor-sharp. The wind has freshened and the waves are shorter. The bow dips and rears, showering the bridge with spray.

14. EXT        BOAT / BRIDGE        DAY

Second Watch on the bridge.

The CAPTAIN is standing beside QUARTERMASTER KRIECHBAUM, who is "shooting" the sun with a sextant. KRIECHBAUM is 28, a taciturn man with kindly eyes. Silence apart from the throb of diesels and the hiss of the waves.

Strange, suppressed tension. Gulls soar round the boat with unblinking eyes fixed on the men below. The CAPTAIN is staring straight ahead into the boundless Atlantic.

CAPTAIN (muttering)

Well, here we are again.  
High time too.

The QUARTERMASTER steals a sidelong glance at him and grins. The LOOKOUTS sweep the horizon with their binoculars. The CAPTAIN glances warily at the sky.

CAPTAIN (quietly)

Keep your eyes skinned -  
this is a tricky part of the  
world. Our British playmates  
like to jump us round here.

He moves aside and leans against the bridge casing.

CAPTAIN

A n d they know just when to  
expect us. Dockyard workers,  
cleaning women, whores -  
they're not short of informants.

Silence. The CAPTAIN gives a sudden start - a gull swoops down with a harsh scream, then soars elegantly away.

CAPTAIN

Goddam brutes.

Another silence. The bow slices into the swell and water streams over the casing. LOOKOUT DUFTE, 18, gives a hearty yawn.

CAPTAIN

You, Dufte, keep your trap shut and your eyes open.

DUFTE

Aye-aye, sir.

CAPTAIN

If those French mam'selles are too much for you, give 'em a miss.

DUFTE's ears turn red.

CAPTAIN (peers at him)

Is that your trouble?

DUFTE's ears turn redder still.

DUFTE

Could be, sir.

The CAPTAIN smirks and suppresses a comment. Eventually he leans over to the SECOND LIEUTENANT and whispers something to him. The SECOND LIEUTENANT grins broadly...

15. INT      BOAT / CONTROL ROOM      DAY

The WAR CORRESPONDENT starts up the ladder to the bridge, then freezes as a beetroot-red face appears in the upper hatch.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (bellowing in his face)

A l a r m !

The alarm bell sounds - frighteningly loud.

LOOKOUTS are already dropping through the hatch. The WAR CORRESPONDENT tumbles down the inside of the conning tower and onto the deck plates.

A breathless montage sequence follows, illustrating crash-dive procedure in full technical detail.

Bow compartment: men roll out of their bunks and hammocks and dash to their action stations, stumbling and cursing.

Head: the door bursts open and BOCKSTIEGEL rushes out, hoisting his pants as he goes.

Engine room: the alarm bell shrills above the pounding of the diesels. Lights flash on and hands tug at fuel control levers.

Control room: scurrying figures and shouted orders. The WAR CORRESPONDENT clings to the bulkhead door-surround, numb with alarm.

Inside conning tower: the SECOND LIEUTENANT slams the upper hatch shut and spins the handwheel.

SECOND LIEUTENANT

Upper lid secured!

Engine room: the exhaust and air intake valves are shut and the engines clutched out.

Control room: ready-to-dive reports crackle from the public address system.

CHIEF ENGINEER

Check main vents.

The control-room hands respond at lightning speed.

CHIEF ENGINEER

Flood Q!

Quick-dive valves are opened and flooding levers operated.

Details: water roars into the ballast tanks. Vents open. Air is expelled, hissing murderously.

Boat's exterior: air escapes from the hull with a thunderous roar. Whirling, hissing, seething bubbles.

Control room:

CHIEF ENGINEER

All hands forward!

Various compartments: the shouted order is transmitted throughout the boat. Men hurry forward at a blundering run. A cavalcade of crouching figures stampedes through the wardroom and C.P.O.s' Mess into the bow compartment.

Sea: U96 is going under. The bow dips, the bridge disappears, and a mighty swirl of water closes over the stern.

Control room: the compartment is tilting heavily. Everyone holds on tight. All noise ceases as though lopped off with a knife.

Under water: the boat is diving at a pronounced bow-down angle. Not a sound.

Control room: the WAR CORRESPONDENT, bathed in sweat, is holding his breath. His eyes stray to the CAPTAIN. The CAPTAIN, who is loling against the chart table, nods all round and grins broadly.

CAPTAIN

That had you.

Universal bewilderment. Everyone stares at him.

CAPTAIN

Practice makes perfect. Got to keep you on your toes.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (also grinning)

Practice alarm.

The men unwind, looking relieved. The CHIEF ENGINEER shakes his head and wipes the sweat from his brow. The WAR CORRESPONDENT breathes hard with his chin tilted back. His nerves are obviously jangling.

CAPTAIN (amiably)

Deeper, Chief. Let's see how the hull valves and glands hold up.

The CHIEF ENGINEER issues some muted orders.

Under water: absolute silence. U96 is even more bow-down and descending smoothly.

Control room: the compartment is now inclined at an extreme angle. The WAR CORRESPONDENT stares at the depth gauge as though mesmerized: 50 metres, 60 metres...

SECOND LIEUTENANT (whispering to him)

The shipyard guarantee says ninety metres, but we can beat that by a mile.

Under water: the boat is still descending, but even more rapidly.



Control room: the depth-gauge needle creeps past 70 metres, then 80. A tremor runs through the hull. The WAR CORRESPONDENT's face registers stark terror.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (quietly)

There's a limit, of course.  
Then the pressure hull gives  
way and the skin collapses -

(he squeezes an imaginary lemon)  
like a paper bag.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT gulps and hangs on grimly. The CAPTAIN, who is secretly watching him, smirks. The needle passes 120 metres, 130 metres...

Under water: U96 is visible only as an indistinct shape. The depths become steadily murkier and more sinister.

Control room: the hull starts to creak. The WAR CORRESPONDENT looks close to hysteria.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (nodding to him)

Water pressure.

Even the CHIEF ENGINEER is looking worried. He glances at the CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN (imperturbably)

Deeper.

The creaking intensifies. Intermittent bangs suggest that someone is belaboring the hull with a sledgehammer. Then comes a dull rumble. The WAR CORRESPONDENT gives an involuntary yelp. A high-pitched screech, mingled with frightful rasping noises. The compartment shudders.

Under water: U96 is scuffing the seabed, leaving a huge cloud of mud in her wake.

Control room: the whole compartment lurches violently. More crashes and bangs. The WAR CORRESPONDENT shuts his eyes.

CAPTAIN (laconically)

She's got to be able to take it

Another spine-chilling screech of metal, then silence. All sound and movement ceases.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT cautiously opens his eyes. Their far-away expression fades. The CAPTAIN tweaks his cap down over his nose and looks round triumphantly.

CAPTAIN

You see? Right, Chief,  
that'll do for now. Take her up.

Deliverance. Compressed air hisses into the ballast tanks.

16. EXT        SEA / BOAT        DAY

U96 breaks surface in a flurry of foam. Water gushes through the gratings, a last long swell rolls over the bridge, and the boat has returned to the upper world.

17. INT        BOAT / CONTROL ROOM        DAY

Muffled words of command. The LOOKOUTS climb the ladder. The CAPTAIN glances across at the WAR CORRESPONDENT, who totters over to the flooding panel and sinks down exhausted.

CAPTAIN

Well?

He grabs a handful of prunes from a crate, stuffs one in his mouth and offers the rest to the WAR CORRESPONDENT.

CAPTAIN (grinning)

A bit different from  
a normal tub, eh?

The WAR CORRESPONDENT nods resignedly, chewing on a prune. A sudden urgent cry:

LOOKOUT (OFF)

A l a r m   a i r c r a f t !

18. EXT      SEA / BOAT      DAY

A diabolical roar of aero engines. CAMERA swoops down out of the sky and races toward a speck in the sea - U96.

The image vibrates, propellers whirl.

19. INT      BOAT / CONTROL ROOM      DAY

Pandemonium. Men stampede through the compartment, stumbling and slithering.

CAPTAIN (yelling)

Flood everything!

20. EXT      SEA / BOAT      DAY

A scream of engines. The airplane races toward U96, looming larger every moment.

21. INT      BOAT / CONTROL ROOM      DAY

The control room tilts. Water cascades through the lower hatch and onto the deck plates.

22. EXT      SEA / BOAT      DAY

U96 puts her nose down like a dive bomber and submerges in a welter of foam.

23. EXT      SEA      DAY

The airplane streaks over the point of dive. A bomb falls away...

A murderous explosion rends the air and a huge column of water erupts.

24. INT      BOAT / CONTROL ROOM      DAY

Confused cries. The compartment gives a lurch. There is a tinkle of broken glass and a clatter of metal.

CAPTAIN (bellowing)

Missed! Try again, sonny,  
you've still got one more  
chance.

25. EXT      SEA      DAY

The airplane zooms into the sky, banks, and races in for another pass. A second bomb falls clear and splashes into the sea.

26. EXT      UNDER WATER      DAY

A dazzling flash rends the sea. There is a muffled but jarring explosion which rocks the boat and makes the water boil.

27. INT      BOAT / CONTROL ROOM      DAY

Bodies and objects go flying. Cries of pain. The CAPTAIN, who has been hurled to the deck plates, shakes himself and gasps for breath.

28. EXT      SEA      DAY

The airplane turns away and zooms back into the sky. It dwindles until we lose sight of it against the clouds. The roar of engines fades.

Silence returns.

29. INT BOAT / CONTROL ROOM DAY

Several seconds of inertia. Everyone is breathing fast. The CAPTAIN regains his composure first.

CAPTAIN (grunting)

That's it. Show's over.

Everyone straightens up with an effort, still panting, except the WAR CORRESPONDENT, who remains sprawled on the deck plates.

30. EXT SEA / BOAT NIGHT

Panoramic shot of U96 gliding across a fairy-tale sea daubed with silver by the moon. Peace and quiet reign. The wind has dropped and the swell has moderated. Fantastic cloud-castles tower above the horizon.

Not a sound apart from the gentle hiss of the waves and a muffled throb of diesel engines.

31. INT BOAT / P.O.s' MESS NIGHT

Dim emergency lighting. Subdued snores from the bunks.

PILGRIM (half asleep)

A tart pissed on my back  
one time. Some sensation,  
I can tell you.

HINRICH

Filthy bugger!

FRENSSEN gives an appreciative grunt. The WAR CORRESPONDENT is lying belly-down in his bunk, unable to sleep.

FRENSSEN

That's kids' stuff. I've heard  
there's nothing to beat a cork  
with a nail in it and a violin  
string on the end. All you do is  
shove it up your ass and get  
somebody to play a tune.

PILGRIM

Sounds too much like hard work.

FRENSSSEN

They say it tickles you up a treat.

PILGRIM chuckles lewdly. FRENSSSEN unleashes a last subdued fart and dozes off.

Silence.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT opens his eyes and listens. He hears the scratch of pen on paper and pushes his curtain back. A small reading lamp is burning over the opposite bunk - Ensign ULLMANN is writing a letter. The WAR CORRESPONDENT watches him for a while. Suddenly, ULLMANN pauses and stares at a photo. Something is evidently preying on his mind.

WAR CORRESPONDENT (whispering)

Is that her?

ULLMANN starts and looks up.

WAR CORRESPONDENT (smiling)

The girl who was waving  
you goodbye?

ULLMANN hesitates briefly, then gives an embarrassed nod.

WAR CORRESPONDENT

French?

ULLMANN nods again. Pause. PILGRIM is sleeping quietly, FRENSSSEN snoring hard.

ULLMANN (softly)

Know the flower shop next  
door to the Café Pierrot?

WAR CORRESPONDENT

Sure.

(he grins)

And the two girls that work  
there. Jeannette and - what's  
the other one called?

ULLMANN

Françoise.

(pauses)

We're engaged - unofficially, of course.

WAR CORRESPONDENT (indicating photograph)  
May I?

ULLMANN hands him the photo and the WAR CORRESPONDENT studies it.

WAR CORRESPONDENT  
Pretty girl.

ULLMANN smiles sadly and sinks back, staring at the deckhead.

WAR CORRESPONDENT  
Anything wrong?

ULLMANN (quietly)  
She's going to have a baby.

Pause. The WAR CORRESPONDENT stares at him, eyebrows raised.

WAR CORRESPONDENT  
For God's sake, Ullmann,  
you know what'll happen to  
her! If the Resistance find  
out she's going to have a  
child by a German...

ULLMANN (despairingly)  
I know. They'll mail her a  
little black coffin and cut  
off her hair and -

He breaks off, on the verge of tears.

ULLMANN  
But what can I do? She's  
dead set on having it.

Another pause. FRENSSSEN grunts and stops in mid-snore.  
The WAR CORRESPONDENT hands the photo back.

WAR CORRESPONDENT  
Man, you've really got  
problems, haven't you?

ULLMANN nods mournfully and returns to his letter. The  
WAR CORRESPONDENT switches on his own reading light,  
takes a notebook from his locker and starts writing too.

CAMERA zooms in on his notebook. We read: "Any day now.  
U96 is speeding toward the enemy. Her crew are ready and  
determined to do battle for their beloved Fatherland."

32. EXT     SEA / BOAT     DAY

Silence. Everything looks gray on gray. Not a breath of wind, not a wave in sight. Viewed against the boundless Atlantic, the submarine looks tiny. Not a glimmer, not a hint of color - nothing but uniform and soul-destroying gray.

A scene expressive of intense melancholy.

33. EXT     BOAT / BRIDGE     DAY

Third Watch on the bridge.

Bearded, exhausted faces. Nobody speaks. The LOOKOUTS raise and lower their glasses like robots. The QUARTERMASTER stares dismally over the bridge casing.

QUARTERMASTER (to himself)

Goddammit.

34. INT     BOAT / WARDROOM     DAY

The submarine is almost motionless. Faint croaking sounds issue from the loudspeaker, which is hooked up to a radio program. The officers are seated round the table, eating. The CAPTAIN's hair is tousled and his sweater has seen better days. All present have grown beards except the FIRST LIEUTENANT, whose face is as smooth as a baby's bottom. The atmosphere is frigid.

CHIEF ENGINEER

We're gulping precious fuel  
for no good reason. Ah well,  
that's not my problem.

CAPTAIN (curtly)

No, Chief, it isn't.

A pause.



The radio is broadcasting victory fanfares interspersed with special communiqués devoted to German naval successes. The CAPTAIN's eyes are on the FIRST LIEUTENANT, who sits there stiffly, radiating gentility and wielding his knife and fork like surgical instruments. He is currently performing an autopsy on a canned sardine. The others steal glances at him too, exchange side long looks and grin to themselves.

The CAPTAIN dismisses the radio reports with an angry growl.

CAPTAIN

Bleeding the British of cargo space! Wiping out enemy tonnage! Tonnage! They're talking about sound, seaworthy ships. That lousy propaganda makes us sound like vandals and butchers!

No response. Clearly, no one cares to take issue with him. They all go on chomping noisily.

CAPTAIN

Still no orders. Our lords and masters in Berlin must be too busy dreaming up new swearwords for Churchill. What is it they call him these days, the old pirate?

Nobody produces an answer, so he supplies one himself.

CAPTAIN

Drunkard, sot, paralytic...  
(he snorts)

I must say, he's giving us plenty of trouble for a drink-sodden paralytic!

The FIRST LIEUTENANT sits there stiff as a ramrod, looking mulish.

FIRST LIEUTENANT

We'll cut him down to size all the same, sir, I'm sure of it.

The moment has come at last. Tension mounts.

CAPTAIN (with chill asperity)

Let me tell you something,  
you smart-ass: Churchill isn't  
finished yet - not him. I  
dread to think how many of  
his ships are getting through  
this minute - n o w , while we  
sit here twiddling our thumbs!

The FIRST LIEUTENANT flushes and busies himself with his sardine.

CAPTAIN

Where are you hiding the  
Luftwaffe, Herr Göring -  
where are all our naval  
reconnaissance planes?  
The British have plenty

(another snort)

Talking big, that's all he's  
capable of, the fat slob.

(slurping tea)

They're bigmouths, the lot  
of them!

An icy hush. The CAPTAIN turns abruptly to the WAR  
CORRESPONDENT!

CAPTAIN (acidly)

Go on, Werner, take that down  
- put it in your naval epic.  
The Propaganda Ministry will  
love it.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT looks hurt and avoids the CAPTAIN's  
eye. The rest look just as abashed.

Silence. The FIRST LIEUTENANT carefully excises a sardine's  
backbone. All at once, the CAPTAIN grins.

CAPTAIN

Music, that's what we need.  
Our overgrown Hitler Youth  
leader might like to put a  
record on.

Sensing that the words apply to him, the FIRST LIEUTENANT  
jumps up, puce in the face.

CAPTAIN (calling after him)

"Tipperary," if you've no  
objection.

35. INT      BOAT / BOW COMPARTMENT      DAY

Heads emerge from bunks. Mouths hang open in surprise. The opening bars of "Tipperary" are blaring from the public address system.

36. INT      BOAT / ENGINE ROOM      DAY

The music blends with the pounding of the diesels. JOHANN, the wraithlike engine-room C.P.O., walks into CAMERA with a wry grin on his face...

37. INT      BOAT / WARDROOM      DAY

The CAPTAIN has recovered his spirits. Raucous singing is coming from the bow compartment.

CAPTAIN (mischievously)

Worried about your  
ideological virginity,  
Number One? Surely a  
little song won't hurt it?

The FIRST LIEUTENANT goes even redder in the face and says nothing. The CAPTAIN joins in the chorus with a will. The CHIEF ENGINEER and SECOND LIEUTENANT follow suit. Thoroughly disconcerted, the WAR CORRESPONDENT exchanges a look with the FIRST LIEUTENANT, who sits there in frigid silence, doggedly dismembering another sardine.

A choral crescendo. "Tipperary" is now being bawled by the entire crew.

38. EXT      BOAT / BRIDGE      DAY

Dense fog. The boat is chugging slowly along.

First Watch on the bridge. The WAR CORRESPONDENT stands beside the QUARTERMASTER, dozing on his feet. The CHIEF ENGINEER is smoking a cigarette in the "conservatory" and staring moodily into space.

QUARTERMASTER (gruffly)

Goddam fog, goddam moisture,  
goddam mooching around.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT stares straight ahead and makes no comment.

QUARTERMASTER

And the folks back home -  
they don't even know where  
we are. No mail, no contact,  
nothing. If we're sunk, they  
don't hear till months afterwards.

A long silence.

WAR CORRESPONDENT

Married, Kriechbaum?

The QUARTERMASTER nods. His smile is bashful.

QUARTERMASTER

Three boys - strapping  
youngsters.

(he indicates the CHIEF ENGINEER)

So's he. Got spliced a year ago.

(lowering his voice)

He's worried about his wife.  
She's very sick.

The CHIEF ENGINEER turns away, almost as if he has overheard,  
and stares at the boat's wake.

QUARTERMASTER

This is his last patrol.  
He's already done twelve,  
nearly all with the Old Man.  
They really click, those two.

(peers through his glasses again)

Our Chief knows his stuff,  
you'll find that out for  
yourself.

Pause. The WAR CORRESPONDENT half turns to look at the  
solitary CHIEF ENGINEER. Suddenly, the QUARTERMASTER  
stiffens. He has seen something. He whips the plug out  
of the voice pipe.

QUARTERMASTER (into voice pipe)  
Captain from bridge. Object on the  
starboard bow.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT is seized with excitement. He stares  
into the fog but fails to see anything.

QUARTERMASTER (pointing)

There.

The CAPTAIN hurries to the bridge, followed by the SECOND LIEUTENANT.

QUARTERMASTER

Over there, Captain. Green thirty.

The CAPTAIN borrows a pair of glasses and stares through them for several seconds. A dark speck shows up against the fog.

CAPTAIN

Turn towards.

The QUARTERMASTER calls some steering orders down the hatch. The boat swings to starboard and approaches the speck. Suspense mounts. The WAR CORRESPONDENT holds his breath. The object slowly draws nearer and takes on the shape of a boat - a lifeboat...

CAPTAIN (to WILLIBERT and ZEITLER)

You two, go below. You're not wanted for the present.

The two men look puzzled and disappear below.

CAPTAIN (to WAR CORRESPONDENT)

Adults only.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT tenses, a prey to dark foreboding. Silence on the bridge. Everyone stares intently into the fog.

CAPTAIN

Stop both.

The sound of engines gives way to an unaccustomed silence. Long shot of a strange spectacle: two manmade objects meeting in the immensity of the Atlantic. They bob there gently at an appropriate distance.

The CAPTAIN hands his glasses to the WAR CORRESPONDENT, who raises them reluctantly. They magnify the image of the little lifeboat. It looks horrific - a mass of charred and splintered planking - but it is mercifully empty.

39. INT BOAT / WARDROOM DAY

Little motion. The CHIEF ENGINEER is doing a crossword puzzle, the FIRST LIEUTENANT perusing files, the CAPTAIN brooding. The rest are dozing. The WAR CORRESPONDENT idly watches a fly that has settled on the regulation photoportrait of Admiral Dönitz.

The general impression is one of lethargy and boredom, but this is spurious. We intercept some furtive glances at the small machine on the wardroom table: the SECOND LIEUTENANT is busy decoding a new signal.

The CAPTAIN eventually takes the slip of paper, reads it, and disappears through the control-room bulkhead without a word.

The others look at each other and come to life. A comic spectacle: they all tag along like dogs trailing after a bitch on heat.

40. INT BOAT / CONTROL ROOM DAY

The CAPTAIN is bending over the chart. He holds the signal in his left hand and wields the dividers with his right. The QUARTERMASTER has also materialized from the depths of the compartment.

CAPTAIN (muttering)

We might just make it...  
Could be worse...

The QUARTERMASTER clears his throat. His tone is studiously casual.

QUARTERMASTER

New course, Captain?

CAPTAIN

Hang on.

The FIRST LIEUTENANT can't contain himself.

FIRST LIEUTENANT

Might I see that, sir?

The CAPTAIN holds out the signal without looking up. Everyone crowds round the FIRST LIEUTENANT and reads it over his shoulder.

Signal: "Convoy Square XY, mean course 60 degrees, zigzagging. Speed 8 knots. U56.

Disappointment sets in. The group melts away, looking downcast.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (to WAR CORRESPONDENT)

U56 - that's Martens's boat.  
He's operating against an  
enemy convoy. Miles from  
here, though.

CHIEF ENGINEER

That makes five boats under  
orders to engage.

He looks more disappointed than anyone. He flops onto a sack of potatoes and stuffs some prunes in his mouth.

CHIEF ENGINEER

When in hell are we going  
to get some orders?

41. EXT      SEA / BOAT      DAY

A supremely beautiful evening. A crimson fireball hovers on the horizon, and the whole of the eastern sky is bathed in shimmering reddish-violet light.

U96 cruises past CAMERA at close range. The bow-wave hisses, the wake seethes and sparkles. Then the U-boat dwindles in size and glides silently into the setting sun.

Perfect peace.

42. INT      BOAT / P.O.s' MESS      NIGHT

Dim emergency lighting only. Muffled snoring, no sign of movement.

FRENSSEN (half asleep)

... in Paris, it was, in one  
of those bistros.

A pause. He yawns.

PILGRIM (whispering)

Well?

FRENSSSEN

Well, there was this nigger sitting across from me with a blond number. She kept touching him up under the table. You know the French - they don't care who sees.

PILGRIM sniggers to himself.

FRENSSSEN

Well, all at once he starts panting and rolling his eyes. I take a peek under the table, just in time to see the bugger come - all over my shoes.

PILGRIM gives a lecherous giggle, sighs contentedly and dozes off. FRENSSSEN, too, starts snoring.

We hear the scratch of pen on paper. The WAR CORRESPONDENT has his light on and is writing. Ensign ULLMANN is lying in the opposite bunk with a thick scarf wound round his neck. His face is streaming with sweat and his head tossing feverishly to and fro.

Closeup of the WAR CORRESPONDENT's notebook. He is writing: "15th day at sea. No convoy, no sightings - nothing. I have been detailed to stand watch for ULLMANN, who is sick."

43.EXT      BOAT / BRIDGE      NIGHT

The boat is plunging through eerie, ghostly darkness. Icy wind, racing clouds, showers of spray. Second Watch, including the WAR CORRESPONDENT, look like mummies in their thick clothing.

An impression of silence despite the pounding engines and hissing waves. Nobody speaks. The WAR CORRESPONDENT slowly sweeps his sector through binoculars. Extreme concentration.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (quietly)

On your toes, all. Keep awake.



The WAR CORRESPONDENT searches the skyline inch by inch. Strange specks of light swim into view - marine phosphorescence - then dark mountains. Clouds? The diabolical interplay of light and shadow creates an unreal kaleidoscope of images.

Quite suddenly, we glimpse a black speck on the horizon. The WAR CORRESPONDENT grips his glasses hard. A ship? He lowers the glasses, eyes watering with strain, then looks again. Nothing - the black speck has vanished. The WAR CORRESPONDENT's heart is thumping - we can sense it.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (swearing softly  
to himself)

Black as a witch's tit. We could  
ram the Queen Mary in this.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT's arms are tiring. He lowers his glasses and sighs with fatigue.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (sharply)  
Lieutenant Werner!

The WAR CORRESPONDENT raises the heavy night glasses once more. The image in the lenses trembles.

Silent suspense.

Then the alarm bell shatters the darkness. Almost simultaneously comes a long-draw-out cry from the control room.

FIRST VOICE (OFF)  
A l a r m !

A hubbub of voices from below. The LOOKOUTS exchange puzzled glances. None of them has raised the alarm.

Then the loudspeaker squawks.

LOUDSPEAKER  
Belay alarm, belay alarm!

FIRST VOICE (OFF)  
False alarm!

Several seconds' silence. Then a distant voice yells.

SECOND VOICE (OFF)

Which goddam asshole did that?

FIRST VOICE (OFF)

The helmsman hit the bell by mistake.

A regular chorus of outraged yells. "For Chrissakes! Stupid jerk! Chuck the bugger overboard! I'll have his guts for garters!"

Peace is gradually restored. The men on the bridge resume their posts. The SECOND LIEUTENANT, seething with fury, says nothing. A menacing silence reigns below as well. There is a whiff of physical violence in the air.

44. INT                      BOAT/BOW COMPARTMENT                      DAY

Noise, a stench of oil and sweat. Torpedo-checking is in progress, and the bow compartment has been transformed into a machine shop. In the midst of the turmoil, taking photographs, the WAR CORRESPONDENT. Grimy, panting seamen are hauling on a horizontal tackle and withdrawing a plump torpedo from its tube. Torpedo Gunner's Mate HAGEN, 23, is directing the operation.

HAGEN (yelling)

Out you come, you randy bugger.  
Time for cock inspection!

The "fish" glides slowly out - a monstrous cylinder like a giant's phallus.

HAGEN (to WAR CORRESPONDENT)

Some pecker, eh, Lieutenant?

The massive object is now dangling from its loading rail - an awe-inspiring engine of war. Shafts are checked, air vessels topped up with compressed air and bearings greased, all in an insanely confined space.

Sweat pours down the men's bare, heaving chests. The WAR CORRESPONDENT clicks busily away.

HAGEN

Look sharp, you idle scum, we've  
got the press in here.

Nobody laughs this time. Subdued curses and venomous  
glances. ARIO, in particular, gives the WAR CORRESPONDENT  
a lingering look of hatred.

The torpedo is now smeared by hand with green grease.

HAGEN (cheerfully)

That's right, boys, nothing like  
Vaseline for an easy ride!

A sudden loud smack. An oily rag has landed full in the  
WAR CORRESPONDENT's face.

The whole compartment freezes. The men stop work and stare  
at the WAR CORRESPONDENT, who stands there with oil oozing  
down his face, thunderstruck.

HAGEN slowly rounds on his men.

HAGEN (in a low voice)

Who did that?

No reply. Sweaty faces in the gloom. Nobody stirs.

HAGEN (bellowing now)

Who was it?

Still no response.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT exits without a word and shuts the  
bulkhead door behind him.

45. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

Rain is exploding against the bridge in bucketfuls, wind  
howling round the jumping wire.

U96 labors on through the bleak and desolate sea, rearing  
and plunging with intermittent groans of exhaustion.

46. EXT BOAT/BRIDGE DAY

Second Watch are on the bridge, the WAR CORRESPONDENT again acting as a lookout.

Oilskins and sou'westers are useless - everyone is soaked to the skin. The LOOKOUTS stand there like stone idols exposed to the fury of the elements. They strain their eyes in a desperate but vain attempt to penetrate the wall of rain - their binoculars are equally useless. The downpour is virtually drowning them on their feet. Not a trace of light anywhere. The glassy green of the waves is extinguished. The sea has aged a hundred thousand years - it looks drab, dismal, pockmarked.

47. INT BOAT/WARDROOM DAY

Sullen ill humor is gnawing its way through the boat.

Four tired, bearded men are sitting round the table at their daily lemon squeezing session. They suck and slurp the regulation vitamins into their systems. The table is piled high with squeezed lemon-halves.

CAPTAIN

Lousy visibility. All we needed.

Next door, visible through the bulkhead, the FIRST LIEUTENANT is putting Ensign ULLMANN through his junior officer's instruction course. Crisp, snappy phrases drift to our ears. The CAPTAIN directs a long-suffering look at the deckhead.

FIRST LIEUTENANT (OFF)

... absolutely vital to break the enemy's stranglehold...

CAPTAIN (raising his voice)

Taking another swipe at Mr. Churchill, Number One?

A momentary silence next door. Then the lecture continues in a lower tone. The men at the table hardly react. All are busy with their lemons. The CHIEF ENGINEER inserts a lump of sugar in his and sucks them noisily. The SECOND LIEUTENANT squeezes his into a glass and blends the juice with sugar and condensed milk, which promptly curdles. The result looks nauseating. The CAPTAIN shudders.

SECOND LIEUTENANT

Jealous, sir?

He drains his cocktail with a connoisseur's relish. The radio is blaring out some special communiqué fanfares.

RADIO

... confronted by the undiminished strength of our gallant naval forces, Britain is...

CHIEF ENGINEER

(yelling, puce in the face)  
Switch that damned thing off!

The loudspeaker falls silent a moment later. No one takes any notice of the CHIEF ENGINEER'S outburst. The CAPTAIN is studying the radio log.

CAPTAIN

Listen to these latest signals:  
"Dived to avoid aircraft - diverted  
- contact lost - dived to avoid  
destroyers - severely counterattacked..."  
(he nods to himself)  
They've turned the tables on us.

48. INT                      BOAT/ENGINE ROOM                      DAY

The noise of the engines is like a slap in the face. Clattering tappets and rocker arms, rhythmical explosions in the cylinders, joints streaming with oil - a hot and steamy inferno of sound.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT has perched on the coaming of the engine-room bulkhead, a sweaty, apathetic figure. He stares at the palpitating engines, bereft of ideas. The pad on his lap bears an unfinished sketch of the scene confronting him. Beads of sweat drip onto the paper, blurring it.

JOHANN, the living ghost, is seated on a tool chest opposite, mouth open, body slightly swaying: in spite of all the din, he is asleep. Engine room P.O. FRENSEN is lounging on a polished steel step, engrossed in a dogeared paperback.

In the background, a helmsman is draping wet oilskins over the stern torpedo tube to dry.

Every shot conveys lethargy and monotony.

49. INT BOAT/FORWARD OF BOW COMPARTMENT DAY

The door to the head opens a crack and an eye peers in: the FIRST LIEUTENANT is shaving in front of the mirror.

Outside the head: ARIO steps back two paces, raises his foot and kicks the door shut with all his might. Then he darts into the bow compartment and shuts the bulkhead door.

50. INT BOAT/BOW COMPARTMENT DAY

ARIO sneaks back to his bunk.

ARIO (convulsed with fury)

One fucking shithouse and we have to have a fucking beauty queen on board!

No reaction. Everyone continues to doze.

Moldy bread, grimy necks, rotting lemons, sweat, stench, frustration.

The 17-year-old PREACHER is lying on his bunk reading a tract. ARIO gives him a venomous glare.

ARIO

Hey, Schwalle, where did you say the Preacher comes from?

SCHWALLE (gleefully)

Kötschenbroda.

ARIO sniggers. So do some of the others, grateful for any distraction.

ARIO

Must be a great place. Isn't that where they flush their babies down the john and bring up their abortions?

Titters from bunks and hammocks. The PREACHER turns crimson and stares hard at his tract.

ARIO (to PREACHER)

Well, isn't that right, you creeping Jesus?

Everyone tenses and cranes forward, waiting for the PREACHER's response. He takes his courage in both hands.

PREACHER

Shut your blaspheming mouth!

ARIO is on him in a flash. Brutally, he snatches the tract away and hits him full in the face with it.

HAGEN

All right, Ario, stow it!

ARIO (spitefully)

He gives me a pain in the ass, him and his religious bullshit. If he had his way, we'd be down on our knees singing hymns every two minutes.

He tears up the tract and scatters the bits around. The PREACHER swallows hard, fighting back tears of anger, but says no more. ARIO flops back onto his bunk.

Apathetic silence returns.

51. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

Sunrise.

A stupendous natural spectacle such as one only encounters at sea. The boat is gliding through a holocaust of light. Sky and sea are ablaze, banks of cloud glowing like a furnace.

52. EXT                      BOAT/BRIDGE                      DAY

The CAPTAIN and the WAR CORRESPONDENT are standing side by side in the "conservatory", staring into the distance.

CAPTAIN (grouchy)

Plain gaudy, I call it.

Pause. Then the FIRST LIEUTENANT calls from below.

FIRST LIEUTENANT (OFF)

Signal, Captain!

The CAPTAIN leisurely climbs down the ladder to the control room. The WAR CORRESPONDENT, who takes no notice, remains absorbed in the interplay of colors.

Voices are heard, quiet at first, then louder. A hint of excitement?

The WAR CORRESPONDENT walks to the upper hatch and looks down. Commotion in the control room.

53. INT                      BOAT/ENGINE ROOM                      DAY

The wraithlike JOHANN jumps as though galvanized. The engine-room telegraph clangs: full ahead both. He swiftly operates fuel control levers and both engines raise their voices in a concerted roar.

54. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

U96 is knifing through the sea, engines pounding. The bow-wave curls away into two broad ribbons of foam on either side of the hull.

55. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      DAY

Feverish activity and excitement, universal relief. Valves, gauges and instruments are being checked. Inquisitive faces appear in both bulkhead doorways. The WAR CORRESPONDENT makes his way over to the SECOND LIEUTENANT.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (grins)

The Old Man's really got the bit between his teeth.

WAR CORRESPONDENT

What's up?

SECOND LIEUTENANT

A convoy. Berthold sighted it in U32 then he lost contact. We aren't too far away. Another six hours should do it.



56. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

U96 slices through the sea with her bow-wave creaming. The foam spurting from the bow vents makes her look like a slavering beast, angry and aggressive.

57. INT                      BOAT/BOW COMPARTMENT                      DAY

The compartment is vibrating to the roar of the engines.

The public address system clicks on. Everyone stares at the loudspeaker.

CAPTAIN (through loudspeaker)

Now hear this. We are operating against a convoy sighted by U32. I expect us to intercept sometime after eighteen hundred hours. That's all.

Another click, then silence. Then tumultous cheers and yells of excitement.

SCHWALLE

Time we unloaded a few fish. We could use some more room in here.

ARIO

But we'll have to unload 'em tonight.

WILLIBERT

Why's that?

ARIO

(loudly, with a vicious look at the PREACHER)

Because tomorrow's Sunday, you jerk. It's in the Bible: thou shalt keep the Sabbath and fuck not thy sister!

Horselaughs and thigh-slapping all round. An attempt to exorcize latent fear?

58. EXT BOAT/BRIDGE DAY

U96 is heading straight into the waves - slicing through crest after crest. Spray hisses over the bridge and lashes the WAR CORRESPONDENT in the face.

The CAPTAIN shouts above the wind.

CAPTAIN

Quite a convoy! Thirty ships.  
They've signalled Berthold to  
hold his fire - maintain contact  
till the rest of us get there.

His excitement infects the WAR CORRESPONDENT - a delirious racing of the pulses like the effect of drugs or fever.

The bow flings snow-white tatters of foam into the air.  
U96 seems infinitely powerful, infinitely dynamic.

CAPTAIN

There's nothing to beat the lines  
of an ocean-going submarine... Or  
a square-rigger. I sailed in a  
three-masted bark, once - lovely  
ship. Holds the size of a cathedral...  
(he grins)  
A bit different from this.

The wind sucks their breath away.

59. INT BOAT/CONTROL ROOM DAY

The compartment is thronged with expectant figures. The weather has deteriorated and the boat is pitching heavily.

Water cascades through the lower hatch. Nervous excitement reigns. The CAPTAIN paces up and down, glances at his watch: just before 4 p.m.

CAPTAIN

Two hours to go.

The steward pours mugs of steaming coffee for the oilskinned men about to go on watch.

CAPTAIN (peevisly)

Why hasn't Berthold reported again?

(to the SECOND LIEUTENANT)  
Maybe he's been jumped by a destroyer.

The SECOND LIEUTENANT shrugs.

CAPTAIN

The British are getting smarter these days. They keep their destroyers circling well clear of a convoy. Shrewd, that - they either fend us off before we sight it or force us to submerge.

He flops onto the chart chest.

CAPTAIN (grinning)

I tell you, it's a hard life.

60. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

Foul water. Heavier seas and an even stronger wind, dark clouds racing overhead. U96 is still bludgeoning her way along.

61. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      DAY

Seaboats come thundering down the ladder from the conning tower. The CAPTAIN lands with a crash, followed by a torrent of seawater, and angrily hurls his sou'wester on the deck plates.

CAPTAIN

Blast the weather!

He goes to the chart table and bends over.

CAPTAIN

How's it shaping?

QUARTERMASTER

We're here and here's the convoy's estimated position - unless the've zigged again.

A sudden cry from the bridge.

BOSUN (OFF)

Masthead on the port bow!

Momentary paralysis, then everyone scatters. The CAPTAIN hurries back to the bridge. The CHIEF ENGINEER darts through the bulkhead and issues loud instructions to his men.

62. EXT                      BOAT/BRIDGE                      DAY

Violent squalls. The LOOKOUTS stand rooted to the spot, streaming wet, peering over the bridge casing. Nothing visible with the naked eye. The BOSUN hands the WAR CORRESPONDENT his binoculars. Through the lenses: an unbroken expanse of dismal gray... The image dances. Then, quite suddenly, we glimpse a tiny hairline. It vanishes again. The WAR CORRESPONDENT draws a deep breath and steadies himself for another look. There it is!

CAPTAIN (strangely calm)

A mast... No smoke ...  
Can't be a freighter ....

He stares at the masthead as though hypnotized.

CAPTAIN

(quietly, through gritted teeth)  
Goddam destroyer!

The WAR CORRESPONDENT stares at him with his heart in his mouth.

CAPTAIN

He's closing, the swine.  
Must have spotted us. Damn,  
damn, damn!  
(yelling)  
A l a r m !

The alarm bell rings. Everyone disappears pellmell through the upper hatch.

63. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      DAY

Seaboats land with a crash on the deck plates as the LOOKOUTS hurry to their posts. The CAPTAIN secures the upper hatch.

CAPTAIN

Flood everything!

64. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

Under water: a dark shape plunges through the surface of the sea. Swirling foam, heaving waves. U96 is submerging, gliding into the depths.

65. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      DAY

Figures filt round the compartment in    near silence. Communication is by whisper or gesture.

The CAPTAIN is ensconced in his saddle at the conning-tower periscope position. The PLANESMEN, still in their wet oilskins, are seated at their controls with the CHIEF ENGINEER behind them. The WAR CORRESPONDENT is gripping the bulkheads doorframe.

Extreme suspense.

CAPTAIN

Periscope depth.

66. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

Under water: subdued hissing, swirling bubbles. U96 glides back toward the surface and levels off.

A bizarre sight: asparaguslike, the periscope emerges from the conning tower and gropes its way to the surface.

67. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      DAY

No sound. Everyone gazes at the conning tower. The CAPTAIN keeps his head clamped to the periscope's rubber eyepieces. Through the lenses: gray-green nothingness with superimposed crosswires. Then the image breaks up to reveal waves with foaming crests.

CAPTAIN (dryly)

Action stations.

68. INT                      BOAT/BOW COMPARTMENT                      DAY

FIRST LIEUTENANT  
(through public address system)  
Action stations.

Low whispers, scurrying figures. The men tiptoe hurriedly to their posts.

69. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      DAY

The periscope motor hums. The CAPTAIN extends the shaft, then retracts it a little.

Through the lenses: whirling spindrift, clouds, sea.

A wave sluices swirling green seawater over the periscope head. Nothing to be seen - then, for a few brief moments, a blurred but dramatic image: the rain-lashed silhouette of a destroyer.

CAPTAIN (calmly)  
Flood tubes one to four.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT glances apprehensively at the SECOND LIEUTENANT.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (whispering to him)  
He's going to have a crack at the destroyer. Crazy, in this sea.

The compartment sways to the tug of the waves, even at periscope depth.

CAPTAIN (hisses)  
Captain to control room.  
Watch your depth, Chief.

The CHIEF ENGINEER tensely checks his instruments and gives some muted orders.

CAPTAIN (calmly)  
Open bow caps one to four.

70. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

Under water: a spine-chilling visual effect. The bow caps swing open, slowly and menacingly. We catch the dull silver glint of torpedoes lurking in semidarkness...

71. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      DAY

The CAPTAIN's hand is poised on the firing lever.

Through the periscope: the crosswires slowly traverse the sea.

Blurred, streaky images. No sign of the destroyer. Spindrift drenches the lens, water washes over it - the periscope is blind ... Then, quite suddenly, as if out of nowhere, we see the destroyer's foaming bow-wave. She is charging straight into the crosswires like a ravening beast of prey.

CAPTAIN (shouts)

Shut all bow caps. Flood everything. .  
Take her down quick, Chief. Sixty  
meters.

72. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

Under water. U96 tilts and dives at an extreme bow-down angle.

Moments later, the destroyer's dark bulk streaks across the surface, powerful screws churning the water.

Then comes the inevitable: a dazzling flash tears the sea apart. A dull, jarring explosion.

73. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      DAY

The compartment lurches like a house in an earthquake.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT tumbles to the deck and lies there half dazed. The PREACHER has cannoned off a pipe. His forehead is bleeding.

Another earsplitting explosion. The deck plates dance and rattle, glass shatters, lights go out. Flashlights drill white holes in the darkness. A tremulous voice calls for fuses. More disembodied voices call: "B o w   c o m p a r t -  
m e n t   s e c u r e !" - "M o t o r   r o o m   s e c u r e "  
- "E n g i n e   r o o m   s e c u r e !"

Heavy breathing. Somewhere, water drips into the bilge. Then a peculiarly unreal effect: frozen, phantomlike figures take shape - the emergency lighting has come on. Bluish vapor makes the dim light even dimmer. Some men are sprawled on the deck plates, others clinging to handholds and groaning with pain.

CAPTAIN (in an undertone)

They actually spotted the periscope  
head. Almost incredible, in this sea.

Dead silence.

74. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

Under water: an ominous silence. CAMERA holds on the forecasting. Slowly, the hydrophone emerges from its recess. Countless diaphragms are combing the sea for hostile vibrations...

75. INT                      BOAT/RADIO SHACK/CONTROL ROOM                      DAY

Petty Officer Telegraphist HINRICH is seated at the hydrophone, listening through his headset. We hear a faint singing note...

The CAPTAIN's face appears in the bulkhead doorway.

CAPTAIN

Any change?

HINRICH'S face resembles a colorless Japanese No mask.

HINRICH (whispers)

Constant, sir.

The CAPTAIN turns back to the control room, shuts his eyes and does some concentrated mental arithmetic. Everyone gazes at him. He alone is directing the battle and making the decisions that will spell death or survival for all.

CAPTAIN (whispers)

Hard-a-port.

HELMSMAN

Hard-a-port, sir.

CAPTAIN

Steer north.

(to CHIEF ENGINEER)

Take her down to ninety, Chief.

The depth gauge registers 80 meters, 90 meters... Absolute silence.

All at once, the CAPTAIN raises his head. More and more faces are upturned - focused on the deckhead. A high-pitched singing note superimposed on a rapid whirr: the destroyer's racing screws.

The sound draws nearer.

Everyone cowers down and braces himself...



76. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

Under water: the sea explodes with a series of dazzling flashes. U96 reels and lurches in the turbulence. Another murderous detonation. The depths seethe and roar.

77. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      DAY

Devastating hammerblows, powerful enough to knock men off their feet. Cries of alarm ring out.

CAPTAIN (shouts above the din)

Easy - easy, everyone. Save it till things get really rough.

Pandemonium persists. Explosion after explosion rends the air.

In mortal terror, the WAR CORRESPONDENT glances at the PREACHER: tears are coursing down his cheeks...

A lull in the nightmare. The after-roar dies away. Groans and the rasp of heavy breathing become audible.

CAPTAIN (quietly)

Switch off all unnecessary lights.

Gloom descends on the control room, reducing its occupants to ghostly indistinctness. They all resume their places, duck and hang on tight.

An expectant hush. Seconds crawl by.

HINRICH opens his mouth and holds his breath.

HINRICH

She's coming in for another pass. Propellers bearing two-one-zero, closing fast.

CAPTAIN (hisses)

Midships - full ahead both.

Feverish whispers. The hum of the electric motors increases in volume. U96 is trying to sneak away...

CAPTAIN (gruffly)

He knows the ropes, our friend up there. Deeper, Chief.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT stares at the depth gauge. 140 meters, 150 ...

The CHIEF ENGINEER is stationed behind the PLANESMAN. His skin looks waxen, his forehead moist.

Everyone concentrates on the depth gauge: 160 meters, 170...  
Violent creaking sounds run the length of the hull.

HINRICH (excitedly)  
Destroyer closing fast.

CAPTAIN  
Deeper, Chief. Quick!

The creaking intensifies. The boat's steel skin is being subjected to enormous pressure.

CAPTAIN (calmly)  
Don't worry, it's only the wood-  
work.  
(firmly) Deeper!

The depth gauge registers 200 meters, then 210...

The creaking is punctuated by loud reports as pressure builds up. The WAR CORRESPONDENT tilts his head back, breathing fast, seemingly on the verge of hysteria. The PREACHER stares apathetically into space. He is no longer of this world...

A murderous detonation. Everyone is catapulted into the air.

78. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

Under water: the depths are shattered by a series of explosions, now dangerously close to the boat. Each fireball, each submarine convulsion is swiftly followed by another.

79. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      DAY

The compartment rocks and lurches. Despairing cries mingle with the sound of smashing, tinkling glass. Another piledriving blow extinguishes the lights.

CAPTAIN  
Hard-a-port!

80. EXT SEA/BOAT DAY

Under water: the depths continue to rage and roar. U96 swings to port in an attempt to evade her pursuer. More flashes, more violent explosions.

81. INT BOAT/CONTROL ROOM DAY

Deck plates dance in their beds. More glass shatters - then the pandemonium abruptly ceases.

Flashlight beams roam across the bulkheads.

Hectic activity, sibilant whispers.

The lights come on again. A scene of desolation: battered, exhausted men are crouching on the deck plates, dull-eyed and apathetic.

HINRICH (breathlessly)

Propellers getting louder.  
She's closing again.

The CAPTAIN sniffs hard and props his head on his hands.

CAPTAIN (mutters)

All right, get it over.

The SECOND LIEUTENANT glances at him quickly. Has he detected a note of resignation in his commander's voice?

The sound of whirring propellers rises in an inexorable crescendo...

CAPTAIN

She's overhead - right overhead.

The others barely react, just huddle there in submissive silence.

The suspense becomes unbearable.

CAPTAIN

Come on, unload.

The singing, whirring note seems to pierce the silence like a scream.

Then - quite suddenly - we get the impression that it is fading. Imagination?

HINRICH

Propellers drawing aft -  
going away.

The sound of propellers is definitely fading. Two muffled explosions, fainter than before.

CAPTAIN

Miles away.

Life seeps slowly back into the faces round him. Everyone straightens up and listens.

HINRICH

Still drawing aft - very faint now.

Another two or three distant detonations.

No more propeller noises.

Silence.

CAPTAIN (to HINRICH)

Well?

HINRICH carries out a 360-degree sweep.

HINRICH

Nothing, sir.

A long pause.

The CAPTAIN removes his cap and runs his fingers through his damp, matted hair. Then he surveys the ghostly faces round him. He even manages a grin.

CAPTAIN

Well, that seems to be that.

The compartment is quiet as the grave. Nobody seems capable of movement.

82. EXT

SEA/BOAT

NIGHT

Slight swell and a light breeze. The sea has subsided.

Water swirls and phosphoresces as a dark shape breaks the surface in a flurry of foam.

Details become visible in silhouette: the forecasing, the conning tower. Seawater streams through the gratings and gushes from the lateral openings in the outer hull.

Then silence returns. U96 rocks gently to and fro.

83. EXT                      BOAT/BRIDGE                      NIGHT

The LOOKOUTS climb to the bridge, followed by the WAR CORRESPONDENT. He gazes at the sea, fascinated by the glitter of moonlight on its surface. Then he scans the horizon: nothing - no masthead, no destroyer, no ship of any kind. With a sigh of relief, he joins the CAPTAIN who is staring out to sea.

A lengthy silence. Each man is engrossed in his own thoughts.

CAPTAIN

So much for our nice fat convoy.  
I wonder if we'll catch up with  
it again...

The WAR CORRESPONDENT hasn't been listening. He stares at the foaming bow-wave.

CAPTAIN (quietly)

Not much fun, was it?

The WAR CORRESPONDENT merely shakes his head.

CAPTAIN (grins)

Still, lucky for us this pond  
is three-dimensional.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT turns to look at the wake. A superb sight: foam phosphoresces at the U-boat's stern and waves sizzle over the casing.

A dim figure walks to the "conservatory" rail and stares pensively out to sea. It is the PREACHER.

84. INT                      BOAT/ BOW COMPARTMENT                      DAY

Fun and games are in progress. Guffaws, hoots of delight, lewd cackles. Somebody is performing a dance routine.

Some members of the WATCH BELOW are sitting on the wooden deck that covers the spare torpedoes, others lolling in their bunks and hammocks. Sweaty clothes and rotting food combine to produce an almost visible stench.

Everyone is looking in the same direction. A small plump figure is cavorting in front of the torpedo tubes, stark naked - WILLIBERT. Some of his messmates are bawling an obscene song while BOCKSTIEGEL accompanies them on his accordion.

WILLIBERT contorts his body into a variety of seductive poses, twitching and squirming erotically.

SCHWALLE (camping it up)

My, my, what a yummy little number.

DUFTE

(camping it up even harder)  
Yes, and he's mine - all mine.

SCHWALLE

Mine, you mean - I saw him first.

More delighted cackles. They all laugh till the tears run down their cheeks.

85. INT                      BOAT/ENGINE ROOM                      DAY

A roar of engines. The compartment is thick with blue fumes. The CAPTAIN, the CHIEF ENGINEER and JOHANN have crouched down to examine a mechanical defect.

The bulkhead door swings open and the FIRST LIEUTENANT hurries up to the CAPTAIN. Excitedly, he shouts something inaudible in his ear.

Both men hurry out of the compartment.

86. EXT                      BOAT/BRIDGE                      DAY

The LOOKOUTS are standing stiffly at their posts.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT, who has just hurried on deck, looks over the bridge casing and freezes at what he sees.

The CAPTAIN and FIRST LIEUTENANT scramble quickly out of the upper hatch. Nobody says a word. Everyone stares at the water.

CAPTAIN (to himself)

The convoy. Some U-boat must have had a field day.

The sea is littered with wreckage - innumerable planks smeared black with fuel oil, shattered crates and life rafts.

Then a gruesome sight: a rubber dinghy comes into view. There is a man in it, sitting like someone in a rocking chair, with his legs draped over the inflated side and his feet almost trailing in the water. His forearms are raised as if holding a newspaper.

On closer inspection we see that both hands are missing. The dead man's blackened stumps seem to point accusingly at the men on the bridge, and his face is a charred black mask adorned with two rows of bared white teeth.

Everyone is transfixed by the spectacle. Ensign ULLMANN turns deathly pale and swallows hard.

CAPTAIN (quietly)  
Ullmann, get below.

ULLMANN  
Aye-aye, sir.

He climbs into the conning tower. The QUARTERMASTER, after a moment's hesitation, follows him down.

The swath of flotsam grows broader: disintegrating lifeboats, splintered rafts, sections of scorched and mangled bridge superstructure. Corpses drift among the debris, lolling heads awash.

87. INT BOAT/CONTROL ROOM DAY

ULLMANN is sitting on the chart chest with the QUARTERMASTER beside him. They are alone in this part of the control room. ULLMANN struggles to control himself, but with little success. His shoulders jerk convulsively.

QUARTERMASTER (in an undertone)  
Get it out of your system, youngster.  
Don't bottle it up.

A tremor runs through ULLMANN's body - then the tears start to flow.

The QUARTERMASTER puts one arm round his shoulders and holds him tight. He sits there rather stiffly, like a reluctant nursemaid.

88. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

Long shot of U96 sheering off. Her bow slices through the splintered, shattered debris, sweeping everything aside like a snowplow.

89. INT                      BOAT/P.O.s' MESS                      DAY

The boat is wallowing sluggishly in a moderate breeze.

Seamen BOCKSTIEGEL is standing in the middle of the compartment. Facing him on a small folding chair, Petty Officer Telegraphist HINRICH (who doubles as medical orderly).

HINRICH

Got a rash, you say?  
Right, drop your pants.

BOCKSTIEGEL bares two gleaming white buttocks.

HINRICH bends forward and stares fixedly at BOCKSTIEGEL's genitals.

FRENSSSEN and PILGRIM crane out of their bunks, looking interested. FRENSSSEN gives a crooked grin.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT glances up from his literary labors.

HINRICH

Hm...

He gingerly investigates with his fingers. BOCKSTIEGEL stares up at the deckhead, crimson with embarrassment.

HINRICH

Rash be damned, you've got crabs -  
a whole goddam army of them. I'm  
surprised they haven't chewed your  
balls off.

FRENSSSEN guffaws, PILGRIM chuckles.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT returns to his notebook, then stops to listen: the rising wind is wailing like a banshee.

90. EXT                      BOAT/BRIDGE                      DAY

The WAR CORRESPONDENT emerges from the upper hatch and promptly shivers. A strangely uneasy atmosphere reigns on the bridge. It is almost quiet except for the low moan of the wind along the jumping wire.



91. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

Deep violent masses of cloud are looming in the northeast propelled toward the boat by a menacing wind.

The sea is a dark shade of blue-green - almost black in the northeast. An ominous sight...

92. INT                      BOAT/WARDROOM                      DAY

The howl of the wind increases in volume.

The CAPTAIN and OFFICERS are at table, lunching off jellied pig's head. With extreme care, the FIRST LIEUTENANT excises a morsel of bristly skin and fastidiously pushes it to the edge of his plate.

CAPTAIN  
Stubble trouble, Number One?

The FIRST LIEUTENANT smiles acidly as he watches the CAPTAIN insert a huge forkful in his mouth, bristles and all.

CAPTAIN (growls)  
If we aren't smack on that  
convoy's course, I'll eat my hat.  
(pauses)  
It's crazy. Still no word from  
Berthold - or anyone else who's  
in contact.

SECOND LIEUTENANT  
(chewing)  
HQ's getting impatient, too. They  
keep asking him for a position  
report.

The CAPTAIN nods, noisily scratching his beard. A momentary silence. The wind gives another spine-chilling wail.

CAPTAIN  
And now this!  
(to WAR CORRESPONDENT)  
These North Atlantic depressions are  
quite something.  
(grins at him)  
You'll see for yourself soon  
enough.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT looks faintly apprehensive. The CAPTAIN exchanges a secret glance with the SECOND LIEUTENANT.

The CHIEF ENGINEER, who has been watching the FIRST LIEUTENANT closely, leans forward and looks him full in the face.

CHIEF ENGINEER

What's that in your eyebrows?  
Better show 'em to the medic  
sometime.

Universal surprise. The CHIEF ENGINEER whispers something in the FIRST LIEUTENANT's ear. The FIRST LIEUTENANT flushes scarlet, stands up and quits the wardroom in a hurry.

Everyone looks inquiringly at the CHIEF ENGINEER.

CHIEF ENGINEER

Crabs.

The CAPTAIN stops chewing.

CAPTAIN

W h a t ?

CHIEF ENGINEER

Our Number One's got crabs.

SECOND LIEUTENANT

You're joking.

CHIEF ENGINEER

The hell I am. In his eyebrows -  
you can't get them worse than  
that. It's a medical fact.

The CAPTAIN and the SECOND LIEUTENANT look at each other and simultaneously explode with laughter. We have never seen the CAPTAIN laugh this way before.

CAPTAIN

I must say, he's really gone up  
in my estimation!

9B. EXT

SEA/BOAT

DAY

The storm breaks. From one moment to the next, it charges out of a gray-black wall of cloud, whipping spindrift from the waves. The whole sky is in violent motion.

Huge waves bear down like a howling mob, lifting the boat on high and thrusting it back into the depths of the intervening troughs.

A roaring, raging, foaming, seething pandemonium, like action pictures of a world in the making...

94. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      DAY

The compartment tilts at a crazy angle, then rights itself with a crash. The WAR CORRESPONDENT is desperately trying to don a pair of heavy seaboots.

A cataract of seawater gushes through the lower hatch.

Somebody comes slithering down the conning tower and lands heavily on his bottom; the CAPTAIN. He puffs and blows beneath his sou'wester.

CAPTAIN  
Very stylish.

He slumps against the chart chest and strips off his dripping clothes.

SEAMEN bundled up in oilskins step through the bulkhead doorway: the new watch.

CAPTAIN  
There's one thing to be said for this weather. At least it'll keep the flyers off our backs.

The control room gives a downward lurch and the WAR CORRESPONDENT lands on the deck plates. He rolls around on his back like a capsized beetle, trying to get his seaboots on. Everyone in the compartment watches him with amused interest.

CAPTAIN (grins)  
Who'd be a sailor, eh?

The compartment heels to port. The WAR CORRESPONDENT reels against the gyro compass and grabs the conning tower ladder.

CAPTAIN (singing)  
The daring young man on the  
flying trapeze...

The oilskinned SEAMEN grunt with delight.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT struggles into his oilskin pants, writhing like a belly-dancer and staggering to and fro.

CAPTAIN

Ever seen a genuine Cuban rumba?  
This beats it hollow.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT is hurled against the flooding panel. Malicious laughter from under sou'westers.

The CAPTAIN stands there barefoot, legs planted firmly apart, wringing out his sodden socks. Grinning broadly, he demonstrates how to offset the motion of the boat.

The compartment heels violently to starboard. A dull thud, and the CAPTAIN himself goes sprawling on the deck plates...

95. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

A gigantic wave hollows out ahead of the boat and crashes onto the forecasing like a sledgehammer. U96 lifts her bow clear of the spray, races into a trough, is borne aloft by another mountainous billow and plunges back into a welter of foam.

96. INT                      BOAT/BOW COMPARTMENT                      DAY

The compartment is heeling over at a grotesque angle. It rights itself and cants in the opposite direction.

Littering the deck, a clutter of soup bowls, bread, sliced sausage and canned sardines. Round it, like cannibals over a cauldron, sit several SEAMEN. Their mouths are glistening with grease.

The compartment heels again. Everyone hangs on tight.

ARIO (grunts with exertion)

Hey, heard the latest?

(grins a little at Dufte)

Dufte's planning to get married.

A chorus of derisive yells.

BOCKSTIEGEL

Ugh! Poor cow!

DUFTE

(to ARIO)

You mean sonofabitch!

SCHWALLE

I always thought he preferred  
a hand job.

BOCKSTIEGEL

They'd do better to stick him in  
a zoo and cross him with a  
chimpanzee.

ARIO produces a tattered wallet and extracts some photos  
with greasy fingers.

ARIO (imitates a fanfare)

And here she is!

DUFTE (puce with rage)

You swine, where did you get  
them from?

The bow digs deep into a wave, and the whole compartment  
gives a malarial shiver.

They all make a dive for the pictures, feet scrabbling in  
an unholy mess of sardine cans, soggy bread and slices of  
sausage.

Almost everyone gets a picture except DUFTE himself, who  
is panting with fury in ARIO's muscular embrace. His  
tormentors peer at the photos, grinning and cackling.

SCHWALLE

You don't mean to say you actually  
screw this secondhand mattress?

Roars of laughter.

97. EXT

SEA/BOAT

DAY

A breathtaking spectacle. The sea is in turmoil, the sky torn  
and tattered by the same storm-force wind that is stripping  
the waves of their skin. Mountains alternate with abysses,  
monstrous eruptions of water rear skyward and then collapse.  
We might be watching a planet in the throes of creation.

98. EXT

BOAT/BRIDGE

DAY

The LOOKOUTS are suffering the tortures of the damned. Only visible for seconds at a time, they cower down and present the tops of their heads to the waves. Tons of water come crashing down, threatening to engulf and drown them on their feet. Then they surface again, gulping air, waist-deep in swirling foam.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT's face is red and raw. He gasps for breath and raises his binoculars for a fleeting look. Pointless...

Another huge wave descends on the bridge and bludgeons the men to their knees.

Almost incredibly, the SECOND LIEUTENANT emerges from the foam and grins at the WAR CORRESPONDENT.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (yells)

How'd you like to go for a swim  
in this lot?

Spindrift lashes the WAR CORRESPONDENT's face like grapeshot. He grimaces with pain and ducks. A big wave breaks over his cowering form.

Then the boat soars to a dizzy height. For a moment or two, we view the heaving, tossing sea like someone at the summit of a Ferris wheel.

SECOND LIEUTENANT

With a pair of handcuffs on!

A breaker shuts his mouth.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT's strength is running out. He staggers, his eyes seared by seawater.

Another huge breaker comes crashing down.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT has failed to breathe in at the critical moment. A swirling maelstrom envelops him - threatens to asphyxiate him. U96 vanishes beneath tons of water, reluctant to surface and regain the open air.

Then the bridge soars up and out of the foam. The WAR CORRESPONDENT's mouth is gaping in the semblance of a silent scream....

99. INT BOAT/CONTROL ROOM DAY

Seawater gushes through the lower hatch. The LOOKOUTS slither down the ladder, the WAR CORRESPONDENT last of all. His face looks parboiled and his swollen eyes are almost shut. He flops down on the deck plates and stares into space.

The SECOND LIEUTENANT has slumped onto the chart chest, panting hard. He is equally close to collapse.

The CAPTAIN pokes his head through the bulkhead.

CAPTAIN (grins)

Lumpy enough for you?

Nobody looks at him. TURBO is quietly, miserably retching in the background.

CAPTAIN

Force 10 aboard a sailing ship -  
you ought to try t h a t some-  
time. In this tub you hardly  
notice a thing.

Nobody responds.

Another wave crashes against the hull. The control room heels right over an intolerable angle.

The QUARTERMASTER shakes off his inertia.

QUARTERMASTER

She keeps on swinging to port,  
Captain. It's almost impossible  
to maintain course.

CAPTAIN (brusquely)

Don't fuss, Quartermaster.

The QUARTERMASTER takes his courage in both hands.

QUARTERMASTER

It's pointless, sir. We're as  
good as marking time.

Pause. Everyone tenses.

The CAPTAIN glares at the QUARTERMASTER, who holds his gaze. Then he gives a noisy sniff, steps deliberately through the bulkhead into the control room and lurches over to the public address system. Finally:

CAPTAIN (into microphone)  
Stand by to dive!

100. EXT                    SEA/BOAT                    DAY

Seething foam, flying spray, spindrift scudding like smoke.

One last wave breaks over the boat before it disappears below the surface.

Under water: swirling bubbles. U96 is still dancing wildly, the muffled roar of the waves still audible.

Down and down she goes, seeking refuge in the peaceful depths. The light fades and her outlines become blurred....

101. INT                    BOAT/BOW COMPARTMENT                    DAY

The boat is motionless, the compartment utterly still.

Gentle snores and stertorous breathing. Every bunk and hammock is occupied. Several men are sprawled on the wooden decking.

102. INT                    BOAT/ENGINE ROOM / MOTOR ROOM                    DAY

The engines are silent.

JOHANN is asleep on the floorplates between his engines, pale as a ghost, lower jaw sagging.

No sign of life in the motor room and stern torpedo compartment.

The silence has a strange quality. U96 might almost have been abandoned by her crew...

103. INT                    BOAT/CAPTAIN'S CABIN/RADIO SHACK                    DAY

Silence here too. Faint snoring from the wardroom.

The CAPTAIN is seated at his tiny desk, making entries in the patrol log.



Opposite him, HINRICH is manning the hydrophone in the radio shack. He removes his headset and stares mournfully into space. HINRICH is a stolid North German. We sense that the CAPTAIN likes and trusts him.

CAPTAIN (watching him)

No luck, eh?

HINRICH (shakes his head)

None before we dived, either, sir. Just position reports and routine traffic - and SOS calls from enemy merchantmen. Miles out of range, though.

CAPTAIN

Hm - if the steering gear on one of those tubs packs up, there's nothing to do but pray.  
(impishly)  
We're stormproof, Hinrich. There's nothing more seaworthy than a boat like this.

HINRICH nods wearily.

Pause.

CAPTAIN (a sudden grin)

Hey, play that record again. You know the one.

HINRICH smiles, unerringly selects a record and puts it on the turntable.

The silence is gently invaded by a scratching voice: "Sous ma porte cochère chante un accordéon..."

The CAPTAIN broods a while, listening to the music. He looks worn out and years older.

Then, as the chanson softly continues, he stretches out on his bunk. His thoughts are half a world away...

104. EXT

SEA/BOAT

DAY

U96 continues to lurch along through a turmoil of mountainous waves and towering breakers, accompanied by the shrill, spiteful song of the hurricane.

105. EXT                      BOAT/BRIDGE                      DAY

Third Watch on the bridge, commanded by QUARTERMASTER Kriechbaum. The LOOKOUTS are being cruelly battered by the waves, their safety-belts subjected to immense strain.

The QUARTERMASTER braces himself sideways against the bridge casing and tucks his chin in. Tons of water come crashing down on his back.

Suddenly, a huge beam sea breaks over the bridge. Seaman Petty Officer WICHMANN's belt snaps, flinging him against the casing. His piercing cry is abruptly smothered by another wave from ahead, which envelops everything in swirling water for seconds on end.

The QUARTERMASTER surfaces, gasping for breath, and looks round in alarm: WICHMANN has disappeared.

QUARTERMASTER (yells)

M a n   o v e r b o a r d !

He crouches to avoid the flying spray and peers aft into the "conservatory", which is buried in foam.

QUARTERMASTER

T h e r e !

WICHMANN has been hurled against one of the light anti-aircraft guns in the railed enclosure. He clings to it for dear life, bellowing with pain.

The QUARTERMASTER decides to take a chance. He unclips his belt, reaches the "conservatory" in one mighty bound, and starts to haul WICHMANN to safety. Yet another wave breaks over them, flinging them against the rail. They hang on desperately. WICHMANN doubles up, clearly in agony.

With a supreme effort, The QUARTERMASTER drags WICHMANN into the lee of the bridge casing. A breaker promptly smashes WICHMANN to the deck.

Helping hands pluck at the two men's oilskins.

The upper hatch is already open. More hands drag, push, thrust WICHMANN through the aperture.

106. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      DAY

From above, agitated voices and cataracts of seawater.

Figures splash across the deck plates and maneuver the injured man through the lower hatch.

CAPTAIN (shouts)  
Stand by to dive!

WICHMANN is groaning. TURBO and two others drag him out of the way. The QUARTERMASTER slithers through the lower hatch and crashes onto the deck plates. He rolls aside and lies there, gasping.

107. INT                      BOAT/WARDROOM                      DAY

No motion.

Pallid, hollow-eyed figures are seated round the table in gloomy silence. The general mood could hardly be worse.

SECOND LIEUTENANT

Three ribs broken. He'll be all right.

No reaction.

Next door, visible through the bulkhead, Ensign ULLMANN is receiving junior officer's instruction from the FIRST LIEUTENANT.

FIRST LIEUTENANT (OFF)

... our wolf-pack tactics have really put the fear of God into the enemy...

The CAPTAIN sniffs derisively.

CAPTAIN

This must be the lousiest month on record. No victory fanfares this November - they can put their trumpets away.

The CHIEF ENGINEER is staring at some snapshots on the table in front of him. The SECOND LIEUTENANT is whittling away at a hunk of bread marbled with green mold.

SECOND LIEUTENANT

Mold's good for you.  
(grins)

It's the next best thing to fresh greens. We ought to be grateful.

Nobody reacts.

The CHIEF ENGINEER remains engrossed in his photos.

CHIEF ENGINEER

I bet it's snowed already,  
back home.

The CAPTAIN looks up in surprise, takes one of the pictures and examines it.

CAPTAIN

It's funny, I haven't seen any  
snow for years.  
(he ruminates)  
Real snow again - that'd be nice.

Pause.

WAR CORRESPONDENT

May I?

The CHIEF ENGINEER nods and hands him some views of a sleepy little Tyrolean village deep in snow. They look strangely touching in present surroundings.

Then he proffers a snap of himself with a pretty young woman, both on skis.

WAR CORRESPONDENT

Your wife?

The CHIEF ENGINEER nods again, warmth and tenderness in his expression.

A lengthy pause.

Both men study the picture in silence. The CHIEF ENGINEER's eyes grow moist.

108. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

The storm is still raging - flailing the bridge with shrill, icy gusts of wind.

Mountainous waves collide with beam seas, flinging masses of water in all directions.

U96 is performing a dervish dance. She is hurled around, lashed, tossed and shaken without mercy.

109. EXT

BOAT/BRIDGE

DAY

Second Watch on the bridge. The LOOKOUTS hang on tight as U96 races into a trough. The next wave is towering on her quarter. The SECOND LIEUTENANT stares at it. Instead of taking cover, he freezes like someone stricken with lumbago.

One bound takes him to the voice pipe.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (yelling down the pipe)

Bridge to Captain. U-boat on the port quarter!

Excitedly, he hands the WAR CORRESPONDENT his binoculars.

A huge wave lifts the boat. Hovering at a dizzy height, the WAR CORRESPONDENT grips the glasses hard. Through them we see a heaving watery wilderness, white-capped waves wreathed in smoking spindrift. Then, suddenly, for a second or two, a conning tower. It vanishes in a flash, as if by magic.

The LOOKOUTS duck and bend double. Another wave descends on the bridge and swirls over them.

The upper hatch bursts open and the CAPTAIN climbs quickly out.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (shouts)

There, Captain! One of ours!

The CAPTAIN peers through his binoculars, open-mouthed.

CAPTAIN

You're right.

(shouts)

Get me the lamp - and hurry!

The SECOND LIEUTENANT bellows some orders down the voice pipe, then ducks. A wall of water collapses on the bridge. U96 heels under the impact.

At that moment, the other U-boat's conning tower reappears - high above the foaming crests like a cork expelled from a bottle. A wave breaks over it from astern. Then it soars into the air again.

The CAPTAIN wedges himself between the periscope standard and the bridge casing with the signal lamp in both hands. The WAR CORRESPONDENT braces himself against the CAPTAIN's thighs to give him more height. The shutter is already clacking.

Brilliant flashes pierce the gloom: short - short - long.

An immense billow rears up ahead and breaks, bludgeoning the men on the bridge to their knees.

They surface, gasping for air, and peer over the bridge rail. An answering flash in the gray murk! A white sun shines at them through the spindrift, goes out and shines again: short - long - long.

CAPTAIN (yelling like a madman)

It's Thomsen!

He ducks swiftly as a wave thunders down on the bridge, then braces himself again. The WAR CORRESPONDENT and SECOND LIEUTENANT maintain a viselike grip on his thighs. Water streams down the CAPTAIN's face, which is lobster-red with exertion.

Thomsen's boat edges nearer. High on the back of a wave, the whole length of its hull becomes visible.

The CAPTAIN operates the shutter again. More white flashes spread through the gloom.

CAPTAIN (shouting)

G o o d   h u n t i n g  
y o u   h e l l h o u n d s !

He jumps down fast. Another mountain of water looms up and engulfs the bridge. Tons of water come crashing down on its occupants.

Then U96 races out of the abyss and up another incline.

A bird's-eye view of Thomsen's U-boat. Simultaneously, his winking lamp flashes a reply.

CAPTAIN (translating)

R e c i p r o c a t e !

The light goes out. Thomsen's boat is deluged by another breaking wave.

U96 races into a trough. The CAPTAIN and his men stare upwards, waist-deep in swirling foam. Poised on the summit of a mountainous billow, the other boat looks perilously close. We can clearly make out five figures on the bridge, staring back. One of them raises his hand and gives a fleeting wave. It could be Thomsen.

The CAPTAIN waves too, obviously moved.

Then Thomsen's boat races downhill, slices into the sea with immense force and vanishes in a welter of foam.

The CAPTAIN hugs the periscope standard and inches even higher. Spray whips him in the face.

All strain their eyes for another glimpse of Thomsen's boat. Nothing to be seen of it but a few black dots in a tiny bathtub of a bridge awash with foam.

The CAPTAIN looks upset. He grimaces.

CAPTAIN (breathlessly)

Poor old Thomsen. So they sent him out again...

One last glimpse of the bobbing bathtub, then nothing.

110. INT                      BOAT/P.O.s' MESS                      DAY

No motion. Every exposed surface gives a moist, tacky impression.

The men in the bunks look limp and enervated. The hardships of recent days are written on their faces. PILGRIM has developed a crop of crimson boils with yellow heads. WICHMANN, heavily bandaged, is asleep.

A long, resonant fart breaks the silence.

PILGRIM

Stuff a cork up it, can't you?

FRENSEN (half asleep)

It's those Brussels sprouts.  
They're fatal.

Another fart promptly follows. This is a high-pitched, plaintive whine.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT is flat on his stomach making entries in his blue notebook - the first for a long time.

CAMERA zooms in on the page. The WAR CORRESPONDENT has written: "Three weeks of this storm have turned us into decrepit old men. Not a sign of the enemy. What's the point of corkscrewing around in mid-Atlantic? It's the martyrdom - as if we're being driven to the limits of human endurance..."

111. INT                      BOAT/BOW COMPARTMENT                      DAY

The compartment is motionless - steeped in apathy and resignation. Everyone is asleep or drowsing in the gloom. Faint snores and stertorous breathing are punctuated by farts, softly sibilant or crisply explosive. Otherwise, silence.

Images of inhumanity: dogtired men crowded together in a moldering, stinking cave. Those without bunks or hammocks are sprawled at random on the wooden decking, their pallid faces disfigured by boils and suppurating sores.

Condensation drips into the bilge. Moisture is visible everywhere, as are mildewed scraps of food and traces of vomit.

But for the grunts and snores, we might be looking into a mass grave...

112. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

Under water: the outlines of the boat take shape against a background of gray-green streaks and become steadily more distinct.

U96 glides upward, breaks surface in a flurry of foam, and continues on her way. Little motion.

Distance shot of a green sea flecked with white. The storm has finally subsided.

The boat rises and falls, gently and peacefully, on the bosom of a long swell.

Rays of sunlight pierce the clouds and glint on the fore-casing.

The unaccustomed hush is almost traumatic....

113. INT                      BOAT/WARDROOM                      DAY

Gentle motion.

The loudspeaker is relaying a radio program distorted by a fluctuation hiss of static. Silence reigns among the five OFFICERS at the table. All have finished their meal except the SECOND LIEUTENANT, who is still chewing away.



The CAPTAIN sips his tea, idly watching the FIRST LIEUTENANT. The FIRST LIEUTENANT is punching holes in some papers before inserting them neatly in his binder. This produces a series of squeaking, crunching sounds.

Petty Officer Telegraphist HINRICH appears with the radio log.

The CAPTAIN reaches for it, a trifle overeagerly. He skims through the latest signals and initials them, then relapses into a brown study.

WAR CORRESPONDENT

Nothing from Thomsen?

CAPTAIN

Not a peep. He's been asked to report his position a dozen times.

Pause.

A look passes between the WAR CORRESPONDENT and the CHIEF ENGINEER. We sense the CAPTAIN's concern.

CAPTAIN

He should have reported of his own accord, ages ago.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (dryly, cheeks bulging)

I guess it won't be long before they hang another picture on the wall.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT can't believe his ears. Glancing furtively at the CAPTAIN, he intercepts an icy glare. The SECOND LIEUTENANT goes on toying with his food, quite unaware of his gaffe.

Pause.

The radio is giving out a special news flash. Heavy air raids on Cologne. Large areas of the city center have been completely flattened.

The CHIEF ENGINEER looks stunned. He stares at the ward-room table, nervously sucking his cheeks in, then rises and quits the compartment.

The CAPTAIN glances at the WAR CORRESPONDENT in dismay.

CAPTAIN (quietly)

His wife - she lives in Cologne.

WAR CORRESPONDENT

I know.

The CAPTAIN hesitates for a moment, then follows the CHIEF ENGINEER out.

The SECOND LIEUTENANT looks round the table, mystified.

The FIRST LIEUTENANT is busy with his papers.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT gets up and walks out into the passage beside the radio shack. He peers through the bulk-head. Tight in back of the control room, the CHIEF ENGINEER is huddled on the flooding panel with his head in his hands.

The CAPTAIN is sitting beside him, talking quietly and - persuasively.

An emotional scene...

114. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      NIGHT

A clear, windless night. The sea is mirror-smooth.

U96 cruises leisurely along, her wake shimmering in the moonlight.

Peace and quiet. All we can hear is the rhythmical throb of the engines and the hiss of the bow-wave.

Then clouds drift over the moon. The sea darkens and loses its luster.

The sudden change seems strangely ominous....

115. INT                      BOAT/P.O.s' MESS                      NIGHT

Dim emergency lighting only. The compartment vibrates. Waves are hissing along the hull.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT is fast asleep in his bunk.

A tremor runs through the boat. The throb of the engines falters and dies away.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT slowly opens his eyes, raises his head and stares sleepily around.

Unaccustomed silence.

He pushes his curtain aside. The compartment is deserted.

116. INT BOAT/CONTROL ROOM NIGHT

The WAR CORRESPONDENT peers through the bulkhead doorway, looking baffled. The compartment is full of shadowy figures. Everyone is at his post.

But there are many more men there than usual. They stand motionless, staring up the conning tower, listening for external sounds.

The atmosphere is fraught with suspense...

117. EXT BOAT/BRIDGE NIGHT

Slowly, the WAR CORRESPONDENT climbs out of the upper hatch and onto the bridge.

A clear night lit by a chalk-white disc of the moon...

None of the dim figures in the bridge well takes any notice of the WAR CORRESPONDENT.

Tense silence, intense concentration. Everyone is staring out across the sea - staring at something on the port beam. The WAR CORRESPONDENT raises his binoculars and looks in the same direction.

Through the lenses: neatly arrayed on the skyline, like a toy fleet, are the silhouettes of innumerable merchantmen...

The convoy!

SECOND LIEUTENANT (softly, to the  
WAR CORRESPONDENT)

A convoy - outward bound, four  
columns. Very juicy.

Pause. The WAR CORRESPONDENT hardly dares breathe.

CAPTAIN (calmly)

See any escorts? Destroyers?

QUARTERMASTER (shaking his head)

No sweepers, no hunter-killers -  
nothing.

CAPTAIN  
Strange....

Pause.

He lowers his glasses and glances at the moon.

CAPTAIN

Too damn bright.

The SECOND LIEUTENANT and WAR CORRESPONDENT look up too. The moon resembles a human face - fat and rotund, with a bald pate.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (under his breath)

Looks like a pudgy old regular  
in a French brothel...

They all level their glasses at the convoy again.

CAPTAIN

How many boats have they  
deployed?

QUARTERMASTER

Five including us, sir.

CAPTAIN (grinning)

Hear that, Number One?  
A regular wolf pack.

His sarcasm is lost on the FIRST LIEUTENANT, who merely gives a puzzled nod. Smoothly, with a foaming white bow-wave, U96 glides across the dark water. The moon's reflection is shattered into a thousand facets by her wake.

CAPTAIN (quietly)

Shall we have a go?

QUARTERMASTER (after a pause)

I guess so.

CAPTAIN

Port ten.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT stares at the crisp shadow of the "conservatory" rail as it creeps across the gratings. U96 is heading obliquely for the convoy.

The CAPTAIN turns for another look at the moon.

CAPTAIN

Pity we can't shoot it down.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT breathes deeply, striving to suppress his excitement. He glances at the CAPTAIN and QUARTERMASTER, two calm, bearded veterans silhouetted by the moon. The sight of them reassures him. He raises his glasses - U96 is slowly edging toward the convoy - then peers down the conning tower. The covers are being removed from the deflection calculator, firing-interval calculators and torpedo firing switches. The dials emit a bluish glow.

Somebody hands up the master sight from below. The WAR CORRESPONDENT watches the FIRST LIEUTENANT take it - a mite overhastily - and fit it neatly onto the night-aiming column.

CAPTAIN (quietly)

Well, Kriechbaum, what do you think?

QUARTERMASTER

It'll work, Captain.  
Bound to.

The FIRST LIEUTENANT fiddles nervously with the master sight and squints through the eyepieces. Through the lenses: beyond the sharply defined crosswires, freighters show up as dark silhouettes. We can just make out their forecastles, bridge superstructure and deckhouse aft.

The CAPTAIN glances at the sky. Isolated clouds, but the moon is still unobscured. He swears and looks back over the bridge casing.

FIRST LIEUTENANT (calling below)

Clear tubes one to four for  
surface firing.

The bow compartment reports by voice pipe.

VOICE

Tubes one to four ready for  
surface firing.

FIRST LIEUTENANT

(to petty officer in conning tower)

Angle on the bow five-zero left -  
enemy speed ten knots - range three  
thousand meters - torpedo speed  
three-zero - depth three meters -  
follow for bearing.

Down in the conning tower: the figures are fed into the calculator, which whirrs softly.

The CAPTAIN raises his head. At long last, a cloud drifts over the moon and envelopes the figure on the bridge in eerie gloom.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT holds his breath.

The SECOND LIEUTENANT lowers his glasses and looks at the CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN (crisply)

Attacking now. Full ahead both.  
Hard-a-port. Open bow caps.

The engines roar and the bridge casing shudders. U96 is streaking toward the convoy, which now lies dead ahead. Spray showers the bridge.

CAPTAIN

(shouting to make himself heard)  
Target identification!

The FIRST LIEUTENANT is bending over the master sight. The lenses reveal a dramatic spectacle: vibrating cross-wires centered on a cluster of dark shapes which are steadily growing larger...

CAPTAIN (yells)

Those two overlapping ones -  
take them!

Through the lenses: graticules glide swiftly across dark silhouettes...

CAPTAIN

Double shot on the big tub,  
singles on the others!

Racing engines and seething wake. Feverish excitement is written on every face.

FIRST LIEUTENANT

Tubes one to four ready.  
Targets identified...

His hand is poised on the firing lever.....

FIRST LIEUTENANT (shouts)

Lock on tubes one and two -  
bearing zero-six-five - follow  
for bearing!

CAPTAIN

Bearing now?

FIRST LIEUTENANT

Bearing zero-seven-zero...  
zero-eight-zero...

CAPTAIN (shouts)

Tubes one and two, fire as  
you bear!

The WAR CORRESPONDENT peers over the bow, heart beating  
wildly, face-muscles taut...

FIRST LIEUTENANT (excitedly)

Tubes one and two fired!

118/119. EXT      SEA/BOAT      NIGHT

Under water: a brace of torpedoes hiss from their dark  
recesses and vanish into limbo...

120. EXT      BOAT/BRIDGE      NIGHT

FIRST LIEUTENANT (shouts)

Lock on tube three!

The WAR CORRESPONDENT's eyes are wide and staring.

CAPTAIN (shouts)

Port ten!

FIRST LIEUTENANT

Tube three fired!

121. EXT      SEA/BOAT      NIGHT

Under water: another torpedo darts out and streaks past  
the CAMERA.

122. EXT                      BOAT/BRIDGE                      NIGHT

The FIRST LIEUTENANT is peering through the master sight:  
The crosswires creep further across the dark frieze of  
merchantmen, avidly seeking out their prey...

FIRST LIEUTENANT

Lock on tube four.  
(his voice breaks)  
Tube four fired!

123. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      NIGHT

Under water: almost silently and with evil intent, a fourth  
torpedo speeds on its way...

124. EXT                      BOAT/BRIDGE                      NIGHT

The WAR CORRESPONDENT's glasses are clamped to his eyes.  
Suddenly, he glimpses a long, slender shape.

It is paler than the others - grayer!

CAPTAIN (yells)

Destroyer dead ahead!

Visible in the WAR CORRESPONDENT's glasses, which are  
trembling with excitement, an orange shaft of lightning  
rends the darkness - then another.

CAPTAIN

They've spotted us, damn them.  
A l a r m!

Everyone dashes to the upper hatch. The WAR CORRESPONDENT  
is already scrambling through it.

125. EXT                      UNDER WATER                      NIGHT

A dramatic chiaroscuro of frothing bubbles and churning  
propellers. The CAMERA is speeding through the sea aboard  
a torpedo .....



126. INT                      BOAT/VARIOUS COMPARTMENTS      NIGHT

The whole boat resounds to shouted words of command:

A l l   h a n d s   f o r w a r d !

The CAMERA accompanies the men on their sliding, slithering dash from the stern torpedo compartment, through the motor and engine rooms, to the P.O.s' Mess and beyond.

127. EXT                      UNDER WATER              NIGHT

Shock effect: a frothing torpedo streaks toward something dark. A black wall looms up - a ship's side.

The image erupts into a dazzling fireball. Simultaneously, an earsplitting explosion.

128. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM              NIGHT

Everyone stiffens. The CAPTAIN screws up his eyes.

CAPTAIN (quietly)

That was a hit.

The SECOND LIEUTENANT clenches his fists and bares his gritted teeth, only just suppressing the urge to shout.

129. EXT                      UNDER WATER              NIGHT

Another torpedo tears into a ship's side and blows up - and another. Two more brilliant flashes, two more horrendous explosions...

130. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM              NIGHT

Jubilant murmurs. The WAR CORRESPONDENT is trembling from head to foot.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (dryly)

Number three.

Silence. The WAR CORRESPONDENT holds his breath. Everyone listens hard for external sounds....

131. INT                      BOAT/ENGINE ROOM                      NIGHT

Metal continues to creak and groan. Then comes terrible snapping sound.

Sweat-streaked faces wince in the fume-laden air. JOHANN is pale as death. ARIO's eyes are wide and staring.

ARIO

That's the bulkheads giving way.  
They're a goner....

132. EXT                      UNDER WATER                      NIGHT

The surface of the sea is ablaze - oil is gushing and swirling everywhere. Shattered sections of hull go plunging into the depths, others are blown apart by internal explosions. An obscene chorus of creaks, groans and crashes. The image is steeped in red, like a vision of hell.

133. INT                      BOAT/BOW COMPARTMENT                      NIGHT

Pale faces in the gloom. Some of the men look half drunk, their mouths open in silent cries of exultation, others are trembling with excitement, but the commonest expression is one of shock and dismay...

134. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

An earsplitting explosion. Piercing cries. The WAR CORRESPONDENT collapses on the rattling, dancing deck plates.

Another depth charge rocks the compartment and sends its occupants reeling.

Then a lull.

Water pours back into the depth-charge vacua with a sinister after-roar.

The CAPTAIN nods a couple of times, sniffs hard and scans the panic-stricken faces round him.

CAPTAIN (serenely)

Well, we've had our fun.  
Now we start paying for it.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT scrambles to his feet with a groan and subsides onto the bulkhead coaming.

The CHIEF ENGINEER edges closer to the depth gauge. Big beads of sweat are glistening on his forehead.

The others hang on tight and hold their breath, heads well tucked in.

Not a word. They all know what to expect.

Somewhere, somebody hoists a noseful of snot.

135. INT                      BOAT/VARIOUS COMPARTMENTS                      NIGHT

Fear is on the prowl...

Bow compartment: shadowy figures crawl across the deck and hide away in their lairs like dogs with a bad conscience.

Engine and motor rooms: the ENGINE-ROOM PERSONNEL sit huddled and motionless on the floorplates; the MOTOR-ROOM PERSONNEL are at their posts, alert to the slightest sound.

136. EXT                      UNDER WATER                      NIGHT

Shafts of lightning transfix the silent depths.

U96 lurches in the seething aftermath.

137. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

The WAR CORRESPONDENT utters an involuntary cry. A series of deafening explosions. Men reel around with mouths gaping, eardrums close to bursting.

The CAPTAIN laughs insanely.

CAPTAIN

Those two ships went down.  
We won't have to finish  
t h e m ' off!

One detonation after another, as though the sea has been sown with explosive charges.

A sudden lull. We hear the roar and gurgle of displaced water, isolated grunts and groans, breath rasping in a dozen throats.

The compartment lurches and sways...

SECOND LIEUTENANT (breathing fast)

Jesus, that was close!

CAPTAIN (callously)

Two down, one to go.

The after-roar fades. Peace returns to the control room.

The CHIEF ENGINEER's jaw muscles are working in a face as stiff as a wax doll's.

Even the SECOND LIEUTENANT has turned pale.

A low voice from the forward passage:

HINRICH

Destroyer bearing three-three-zero.

CAPTAIN

Any change?

HINRICH

Drawing astern.

CAPTAIN (grins, whispers)

Half ahead both.

Whispered orders, then silence.

Another lull. Exhaustion, heavy breathing....

138. EXT

UNDER WATER

NIGHT

The depths are hushed. Blurred outlines become visible in the semidarkness: slowly and silently, U96 is gliding along - trying to slink away....

139. INT BOAT/CONTROL ROOM NIGHT

A slight jolt. Distant explosions are heard.

CAPTAIN (softly)

Astern - miles astern.

(an impudent grin)

They missed the spittoon.

He draws up one knee and unbuttons his sheepskin vest:  
The Old Man is ostentatiously making himself comfortable...

The radio transformer, ventilator fans and gyro compass  
have been switched off. The compartment is as quiet as  
the grave.

Everyone listens warily.

CAPTAIN

We haven't lost them yet.

Pause.

CAPTAIN (grins again)

Can't blame them for feeling sore.

Pause, then a whisper from the passage:

HINRICH

Destroyer noises, sir.  
Getting louder.

CAPTAIN

What did I tell you?

They all cower down again, tense their muscles and try to  
weigh heavy.

Piercing cries ring out as the hull sustains a sledgehammer  
blow - and another. The deck plates dance and objects  
fly through the air. Then the roar gives way to a deep-  
-throated gurgle.

The QUARTERMASTER is making marks on a slate.

QUARTERMASTER

Thirteen, fourteen ....

The gurgle of water subsides. The boat sways gently.  
Silence.

Quick, shallow breathing.

Seconds go by and nothing happens.

The humidity has increased. Everything is streaming with condensation.

Then - quite suddenly - a noise that sends cold shivers down every spine: a sinister pattering sound like a handfull of gravel being thrown against the hull...

They all freeze and look at each other with panic in their eyes.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (whispers)

Asdic!

140. INT                      BOAT/ENGINE ROOM                      NIGHT

Another shower of gravel.

The soft, diabolic rattle impinges on the absolute stillness like a klaxon, turning the oil- and sweat-stained figures of the engine room personnel into pillars of salt. Asdic....

141. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

The WAR CORRESPONDENT's eyes are wide and staring.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (whispers to him)

Asdic - new detector system -  
ultrasonic - reacts to mass, not  
sounds. When impulses strike the  
hull ....

There it is again: three or four handfulls of fine graden gravel...

QUARTERMASTER

Swine!

Then it stops.

All that now disturbs the silence is a quiet pissing sound: TURBO, with his penis inserted in an empty can, is relieving himself.

142. EXT                    UNDER WATER                    NIGHT

The surface seen from below, glittering in the moonlight.

A menacing shadow approaches: the destroyer is making another pass.

Her screws grind the moonlight into splinters. Depth charges splash through the surface and drift down, tumbling in slow motion...

143. INT                    BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                    NIGHT

More explosive hammerblows. TURBO is listed off his feet. The half-filled can flies out of his hand and spatters everything in sight. Giant fists pound the hull. Glass shatters, wood splinters....

CAPTAIN (shouts)

That's right, get it off  
your chest!

144. EXT                    UNDER WATER                    NIGHT

A crazy eruption of sound. Fireballs and thunderous detonations. U96 reels and lurches. The whole of the sea is in uproar.

145. INT                    BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                    NIGHT

The lights fail, plunging the compartment in darkness.

A shout: "M a i n   l i n e   f r a c t u r e d !"

Whimpers, sobs, agonized cries.

The emergency lighting flickers on. Commotion and panic: the switchboard has caught fire.

More jolting hammerblows make the deck plates dance and rattle.

Hectic activity: the CONTROL ROOM P.O. pounces on the fire, almost obscured by flames and smoke.

One explosion after another, roaring and bellowing as if the sea itself is collapsing in ruins.

CAPTAIN (shouts)  
Down another forty!  
Hard-a-port!

The uproar ceases abruptly.

Men are panting, gasping and coughing in the dense clouds of smoke that drift through the compartment.

U96 sways and rocks in the subsiding turbulence.

146. INT                      BOAT/BOW COMPARTMENT                      NIGHT

A sorry sight. The wooden decking is littered with broken glass, spattered with food and spilt liquid.

DUFTE and BOCKSTIEGEL are down on the floorboards, doubled up with pain.

WILLIBERT, on all fours, shakes himself as though trying to dispel a nightmare.

HAGEN has tilted his head back to staunch the blood streaming from his nose.

SCHWALLE, covered in vomit, is retching violently.

147. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

Silence.

Although the fire has been extinguished, the compartment is still wreathed in smoke. Its occupants are only dimly visible.

The CAPTAIN pushes his cap back and knuckles the sweat from his brow.

CAPTAIN (shrugging)  
I don't think they like us.

Pause.

Sounds of panting, men's backs bent double in the haze.

The CAPTAIN looks up at the deckhead. A deceptive hush.

CAPTAIN (sarcastically)  
What's the matter, time for tea?



Then he surveys the pictures of misery and exhaustion around him. All the life seems to have gone out of them.

Closeup of the CAPTAIN's face. We sense that he is pulling himself together.

CAPTAIN (quietly)

We really hammered them, didn't we? The way those bulkheads burst!

He grins as if the corners of his mouth have been hoisted on hooks.

Nobody responds. The WAR CORRESPONDENT tilts his head back and stares at the deckhead. The sausages suspended there are coated in an off-white film of mildew.

Visibility improves and the smoke slowly clears. Nothing happens.

Then the WAR CORRESPONDENT lowers his head and screws up his face, unable to take any more. Propellers again....

148. EXT                      UNDER WATER                      NIGHT

The dark shape is returning. Slowly and inexorably, it moves across the glittering surface, growing larger and larger. A malevolent churning of propellers...

149. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

The CAPTAIN tiptoes to the forward bulkhead.

CAPTAIN (whispers)

Bearing?

HINRICH

Two-four-zero, sir.  
Getting louder.

CAPTAIN

Deeper, Chief!  
(to HELMSMAN)  
Hard-a-port!

The depth-gauge needle creeps round the dial. 160 meters...  
170 meters....

150. EXT                      UNDER WATER                      NIGHT

Not a sound. The boat descends smoothly at a pronounced bow-down angle. Its outlines begin to dissolve as the depths become darker and more sinister...

151. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

A groan runs through the hull. Water pressure is bulding up.

CAPTAIN

Bearing now?

HINRICH (tensely)

Two-five-zero. Constant.

Pause. Seconds go by.

Then comes a handful of pebbles.

CAPTAIN (dismissively)

Yes, yes.

And another.

CAPTAIN

We heard you the first time.

Everyone stares at him, clearly heartened by his cocky manner.

CAPTAIN (whispers)

Deeper, Chief. Starboard ten.

We'll try doubling back.

152. EXT                      UNDER WATER                      NIGHT

U96 sinks deeper into the gloom, swinging slowly to starboard.

An eerie, oppressive silence. Then comes the faintest of sounds. Something glints in the darkness. The shadow is returning....

153. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

The needle of the main depth gauge: 180 meters .... 190 meters....

Intensified creaking from the hull and its internal woodwork...

HINRICH (whispers)

Contact bearing zero-three-zero.  
Getting louder.

CAPTAIN (whispers)

Hard-a-port!

154. EXT                      UNDER WATER                      NIGHT

Silence apart from the whine of propellers.

Just visible in outline, U96 is turning to port.

A dark shadow on the surface turns to starboard.

The sound of propellers fades... Then we hear something else: a muffled, sinister shuffling sound. A second and more distant shadow glides into view...

155. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

HINRICH (very agitated)

I've got a second contact, sir!

Everyone looks transfixed. The blood drains from the CAPTAIN's face too.

CAPTAIN

Reinforcements ... The swine!

A fleeting look of bewilderment and indecision. The SECOND LIEUTENANT gives him a worried glance. Is the Old Man losing his nerve? Then:

CAPTAIN (firmly)

Take her down another forty,  
Chief.

The needle creeps past 200 meters, then 210 ...

The pressure hull creaks, cracks, groans...

The CHIEF ENGINEER shakes his head, nerves frayed by the sound. The WAR CORRESPONDENT's eyes are closed. His rigid face resembles a death mask.

The needle registers 220 meters, 230 meters...

The woodwork continues to creak and groan. U96 is now being subjected to immense pressure.

Contorted faces mirror the strain on the hull. The WAR CORRESPONDENT is breathing jerkily.

WAR CORRESPONDENT

No... no ... no...

A sharp report rings out. The whine of a ricochet, then silence.

Everyone freezes in horror. Eyes flicker with panic.

A second report, crisp as a whiplash.

Closeup of the flanges on the pressure hull: one by one rivets are giving way.

Sudden turmoil. Everyone cowers down or scuttles for cover...

156. INT                      BOAT/BOW COMPARTMENT                      NIGHT

Here too, men scuttle round the compartment like terrified rats, jostling, stumbling, desperately seeking cover.

HAGEN

Watch out, those things are  
like bullets!

Another sharp, incisive report.

A babble of cries. Someone is sobbing.

PREACHER (whimpering)

What is it? What is it?

HAGEN (breathlessly)

The rivets... they're popping...  
We're too deep...

Everyone cowers down, afraid to move, panic-stricken to the point of insanity.

157. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

A series of shattering explosions.

Men go reeling across the deck plates as the sea becomes a bellowing, roaring inferno.

A sudden cry: stiff as a ruler, a jet of seawater is spurting across the compartment.

CONTROL-ROOM HAND

We're making water!

Panic-stricken yells. Water is drumming against the opposite wall and streaming down it.

TURBO (shouts)

Mind that jet! It's like a knife.

Another salvo of depth charges explodes with a deafening roar.

158. EXT                      UNDER WATER                      NIGHT

Implacably, the two dark shapes on the surface continue to circle. Depth charges drift lazily down into the depths and burst with brilliant intensity.

159. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

CAPTAIN

Take her up, Chief.  
One-fifty.

The lights go out.

Another volcanic roar.

Flashlight beams flit round the compartment. We catch momentary glimpses of scrabbling feet and gaping, yelling mouths. ULLMANN is convulsed with tears.

ULLMANN (wails)

The filthy swine!

160. EXT                      UNDER WATER                      NIGHT

A terrible eruption of sound. The depths seethe and roar. U96 is rising - desperately trying to escape the inferno.

161. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

The compartment rocks violently.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT'S head is jerking to and fro. He looks like a boxer on the ropes...

All the lights go out again. Blows continue to rain down in total darkness.

FIRST VOICE (panic-stricken)

E n g i n e    r o o m  
m a k i n g    w a t e r !

162. EXT                      UNDER WATER                      NIGHT

An entire pattern of depth charges. They explode above, below and abeam of their prey.

Then, as though lopped off with a knife, the orgy of noise abruptly ceases.

U96 reels and lurches through yet another seething, gurgling, roaring, swirling maelstrom of displaced water.

163. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

The emergency lighting comes on.

Groans mingle with the sound of hysterical sobbing retching and vomiting.

TURBO feverishly closes a valve: the jet of water droops and splashes onto the deck plates.

The ghostly figure of Engine-Room C.P.O JOHANN materializes in the after bulkhead doorway. He is emitting shrill little cries, his face contorted with fear.

The CAPTAIN aims his flashlight at JOHANN's face.

JOHANN climbs through the bulkhead with his escape gear under his arm. He screws up his face and bares his teeth like a monkey, madness in his eyes.

CAPTAIN (snaps)

Pull yourself together, man!  
Get out of here!

JOHANN stares at the CAPTAIN as though mesmerized. His mouth opens wide in the beginnings of a scream.

CAPTAIN (louder)

Get back to your action station -  
at once!

JOHANN trembles all over but stays put. Tension mounts. Everyone stares helplessly, first at JOHANN, then at the CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN (yelling like a madman)

Move, Johann!

JOHANN's teeth start chattering, but still he doesn't budge.

The CAPTAIN turns and dives through the bulkhead into his cabin.

The CHIEF ENGINEER and QUARTERMASTER hurry to JOHANN's side and thrust him back through the after bulkhead by main force.

The CAPTAIN reappears, breathing hard, with a service automatic in his hand.

CHIEF ENGINEER (stammers)

He's gone, Captain.

A long pause.

The CAPTAIN totters back to the chart chest and subsides onto it like a fighter saved by the bell.

Another long pause. Finally:

CAPTAIN (mutters)

Johann, of all people ...  
Sickening - disgraceful!

Every face looks gray and ancient - stricken with rigor mortis.

The CAPTAIN removes his cap and deposits it on the chest beside him. The SECOND LIEUTENANT looks at him. A token of surrender? The CAPTAIN's eyes have retreated into their sockets. His cheeks are waxen, his lips bloodless.

Not a word. Everyone stares straight ahead. HINRICH takes off his earphones and props his head on his hands. His face is dripping with sweat. He has given up.

CAPTAIN (quietly)

That's all right, Hinrich.  
We can hear them anyway.

They can indeed. The air is filled with the whirr and whine of propellers, directly overhead.

The CAPTAIN jumps to his feet and glares upward, his face contorted with fury.

CAPTAIN (yells)

Come on, then!

A shattering explosion knocks him off his feet. The boat is engulfed by another holocaust of depth charges.

Spine-chilling cries from aft...

VOICE

M o t o r   r o o m  
m a k i n g   w a t e r !

CAPTAIN

Full ahead both!

The control room goes mad - it is tossed, shaken, jolted and jounced with apocalyptic violence.

The compartment is slowly but perceptibly going down by the stern...

The WAR CORRESPONDENT stares at the depth gauge with dilated eyes: 160 meters, 170 meters... U96 is sinking.

A hoarse cry: W e ' r e   s i n k i n g !

The WAR CORRESPONDENT seems to have lost his reason. He crawls aimlessly around on the deck plates with a crazy expression, then suddenly clambers through the forward bulkhead and disappears on all fours into the wardroom...

164. INT            BOAT/WARDROOM            NIGHT

The WAR CORRESPONDENT kneels up and surveys the wardroom floor, which is strewn with debris. He looks miles away, like someone in a trance...

Then he proceeds to tidy up.

He retrieves some tattered books, the wardroom mascot (a raffia dog with glass eyes), and then - almost reverently - the regulation photoportrait of Admiral Dönitz...

165. INT            BOAT/CONTROL ROOM            NIGHT

More piledriving explosions. The compartment is tilting badly. Jostling, panting men cling to handholds and brace themselves against the incline.



PLANESMAN

Afterplanes not answering!

CHIEF ENGINEER (quickly)

Switch to manual!

The PLANESMEN struggle to their feet and strain at the handwheels.

166. INT                      BOAT/WARDROOM                      NIGHT

The WAR CORRESPONDENT has discovered something among the broken glass and splintered wood: a crumpled snowscape.

He gives the photograph a lingering stare...

167. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

Crashing detonations mingle with the all-pervading roar and gurgle of displaced water.

A succession of hoarse cries.

VOICE

Main motors not showing full revolutions!

CAPTAIN

Blow Number Three main ballast!

The compartment's stern-down angle continues to increase.

The depth gauge registers 220 meters, 230 meters...

Another cry:    S h e ' s    g o i n g !

168. INT                      BOAT/WARDROOM                      NIGHT

The WAR CORRESPONDENT crawls into a bunk and curls up, still looking at his salvaged photograph of snow-capped peaks. He is trembling all over, and his shoulders are jerking spasmodically - uncontrollably. He is weeping...

A very slow fade. Light and sound are replaced by utter darkness and total silence.

The deathly hush persists for several seconds...

169. INT

BOAT/WARDROOM

NIGHT

Slow fade-in to closeup of the WAR CORRESPONDENT's face.  
He is fast asleep.

Not a sound.

Suddenly he stirs, raises his head and opens his eyes in  
a glassy stare.

Opposite him, someone is sitting slumped at an angle, pale  
as death. His lips are parted and a thread of saliva is  
oozing from the left-hand corner of his mouth: the SECOND  
LIEUTENANT:

In the upper bunk, another man with hollow cheeks, greenish  
smudges under his eyes, and bare white arms smeared with  
oil: the CHIEF ENGINEER.

Corpses? No, both men are breathing.

A faint hum drifts in from the control room.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT gets up and makes his way slowly -  
like a sleepwalker - down the passage.

He peers into the control room, which is strangely hushed  
and manned by motionless figures.

The QUARTERMASTER is bending over the chart, the FIRST  
LIEUTENANT stationed behind the PLANESMEN. A CONTROL-ROOM  
HAND hovers in the background.

The faint hum is coming from the conning tower.

Everything seems strange and unreal. The WAR CORRESPONDENT  
wonders if he is dreaming the whole thing.

Then the QUARTERMASTER glances at him and grins.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT climbs through the bulkhead and flops  
down on the chart chest.

CAPTAIN (OFF, from conning tower)

Quartermaster, take this down. After  
five hours dived at minimum revs,  
became satisfied that destroyers had  
lost us. Periscope observation revealed  
intense glow in sky at two-five-zero  
degrees. Assumed it to come from tanker  
hit by us.

He climbs down the ladder into the control room.

CAPTAIN

We'll surface in five minutes.

QUARTERMASTER

Aye-aye, sir.

The CAPTAIN catches sight of the WAR CORRESPONDENT. He joins him on the chart chest and looks him over. The WAR CORRESPONDENT doesn't react.

Lengthy pause.

CAPTAIN (quietly)

Well, Lieutenant, they didn't get us that time.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT merely shakes his head, incapable of speech.

CAPTAIN

The Chief's a marvel. He's done wonders with the engines and motors - worked like a maniac to patch them up. God knows how he managed it.

Pause.

HAGEN totters through the forward bulkhead. He is a night-marish sight - black with oil and grease and streaked with rivulets of sweat.

HAGEN (chest heaving)

All bow torpedo tubes reloaded, Captain.

CAPTAIN (nods)

Very good, Hagen.

HAGEN attempts a smart about-face but loses his balance and only just saves himself by grabbing a pipe. The CAPTAIN watches him go, visibly moved.

CAPTAIN

Solid gold, these boys.  
Solid gold!

170. EXT

SEA/BOAT

NIGHT

The moon has set.

Swirling bubbles form on the surface - a few at first, then some more and more.

A dark conning tower breaks surface, followed shortly afterward by the forecasing and stern. With a gurgling hiss, U96 returns to the world of man.

An unreal sight: the entire hull is bathed in reddish-yellow light.

171. EXT BOAT/BRIDGE NIGHT

The upper hatch springs open and the LOOKOUTS climb on deck.

A succession of faces, those of the WAR CORRESPONDENT and ULLMANN least of all. They stand there transfixed, eyes widening with horror...

A gigantic worm of black smoke is writhing its way to the zenith, lit from below by dancing flames. We distinguish the dark outlines of a ship's forecastle and poop. Between them, multiple tongues of flame erupt from a blazing inferno.

The faces of the motionless figures on the bridge are bathed in red light.

A long pause, then:

CAPTAIN (hoarsely)

Her back's broken.

Crimson flames are licking round the stern. The sea itself is on fire, coated with escaping fuel oil, the air filled with a malign hiss and crackle.

CAPTAIN

Tough old tub, that.

She isn't settling.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT strains his ears. Has he heard a cry? He peers through his binoculars: just fire and smoke, no sign of life...

Another eruption of dazzling red flames. Streams of sparks are spewing from the poop like tracer.

CAPTAIN

All right, we'll finish her off.

Flood number one tube.

ULLMANN swings round and stares at the CAPTAIN in horror.

The CAPTAIN looks straight ahead, unmoved.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT lowers his eyes and almost imperceptibly shakes his head.

CAPTAIN (gruffly)

I don't like shipbreaking,  
but still ...

The FIRST LIEUTENANT bends over the master sight and issues instructions.

CAPTAIN (crisply)

Open bow cap. Lock on tube  
number one.

The order is acknowledged.

FIRST LIEUTENANT

Number one tube ready for  
surface firing.

CAPTAIN

Bow shot. Just forward of the  
mainmast.

FIRST LIEUTENANT

Target identified.

Closeup of the CAPTAIN's face, rigid and masklike.

CAPTAIN

Fire number one tube.

The FIRST LIEUTENANT depresses the firing lever.

No report, no jolt - nothing. The torpedo glides silently  
through the sea.

Everyone stands rooted to the spot, staring at the flames,  
waiting for the torpedo to hit.

All at once, some rockets soar into the sky and sprinkle  
the sea with flickering pink and blood-red light - distress  
signals!

Consternation on the bridge.

CAPTAIN (dismayed)

They must have gone off by themselves.  
There can't be anyone left on board -  
it's impossible.

They all strain their ears now. Hoarse cries? Horrified,  
the WAR CORRESPONDENT scans the smoke with his glasses.

There they are, beyond a shadow of a doubt! Black dots  
are clustering in the stern - human figures!

The QUARTERMASTER stares at his stopwatch. The torpedo  
is still running...

QUARTERMASTER

Fifteen seconds to go ... ten...

CAPTAIN (yelling excitedly)

Why in hell didn't they abandon ship? It's been hours!

Then comes a gigantic, muffled explosion. A geyser of fire and water erupts from the point of impact, monstrous in its breathtaking beauty.

A mushroom of orange flame billows high into the air and hovers for seconds against the dusky sky: the ship's exploding cargo has multiplied the effect of the torpedo many times more.

Then the geyser collapses. Masses of water and debris hurtle back into the sea.

Isolated cries can still be heard above the dull boom of exploding boilers.

Yet another explosion. Someone is catapulted into the air - a dark form tumbling over and over like a disjointed puppet.

The men on the bridge continue to stand there rigidly, gargoyle faces twisted with horror.

SECOND LIEUTENANT

Look!

Through the WAR CORRESPONDENT's binoculars: bobbing black dots in the water - swimmers. One of them fleetingly raises his arms.

QUARTERMASTER

They're heading this way!

The black dots draw nearer. Beyond them, red tongues of burning oil are licking across the surface in an ever-widening arc.

CAPTAIN (loudly)

Half astern both engines.

The engines roar, churning up the water, drawing the boat astern, drowning the hoarse cries of the doomed seamen. Through the WAR CORRESPONDENT's binoculars: the tremulous image of a pair of arms protruding from a fiery sea. Supplication, or a dying man's curse?

ULLMANN is sobbing - on the verge of collapse. He suddenly finds his tongue.

ULLMANN

Why don't we pick them up, Captain?  
Why not rescue them?

The CAPTAIN swings round, convulsed with anger. He looks into ULLMANN's boyish, tear-stained face.

ULLMANN (imploringly)

Please, Captain - they'll all be drowned. They don't stand a chance.

A long pause. More consternation on the bridge. Instead of flying off the handle, the CAPTAIN turns away and looks through his glasses.

CAPTAIN (gruffly)

Get a grip on yourself, Ullmann.

Through his glasses: the blazing oil is spreading faster than the men can swim. One by one, they die of asphyxia, burning, drowning...

The QUARTERMASTER takes ULLMANN aside and addresses him in a quiet, persuasive tone.

QUARTERMASTER

It's no good, Ullmann. Commander in Chief's orders. We're forbidden to pick up survivors.

He nods at the CAPTAIN, who is staring, ashen-faced, at the men in the water.

QUARTERMASTER (very quietly)

A sailor's nightmare, that's what it is...

With a final groan, the tanker's stern rears out of the water as though extruded from below. It juts from the sea like an overhanging cliff, then slides beneath the blazing surface with two or three muffled explosions.

The sea closes over the spot within seconds, engulfing the huge vessel as if it had never existed.

No further sign of survivors.

172. INT BOAT/CAPTAIN'S CABIN NIGHT

Silence on board. Everyone off watch is asleep.

The CAPTAIN is bent over his desk-top, bringing the patrol log up to date. His pen makes a faint scratching sound as it travels over the page.

He pauses, staring at the bulkhead. We see how gaunt and overstrained he looks - an empty husk of a man...

Suddenly, above the almost inaudible snores from the wardroom, we hear shuffling footsteps. The CAPTAIN starts and looks round.

A ghostly face appears in the gloom of the bulkhead doorway. It belongs to Engine-Room C.P.O. JOHANN.

He gazes at the CAPTAIN like a whipped dog.

JOHANN (in a low voice)

Captain, sir - - I - I wanted to apologize.

CAPTAIN (calmly)

There's nothing to be said. You left your action station at a critical moment. You also disobeyed my order.

JOHANN nods and gulps. He literally crawls through the bulkhead and comes to attention, trembling.

JOHANN

Will it mean a court martial, Captain?

The CAPTAIN subjects him to a lingering stare.

CAPTAIN

How many patrols have you done?

JOHANN

This is my ninth.

A long pause. The CAPTAIN meditates in silence.

CAPTAIN

You of all people, Johann.

JOHANN (close to tears)

It's never happened to me before, Captain. I was - I blew a gasket, or something ... My nerves....



The CAPTAIN says nothing, just gives his beard a prolonged scratch.

JOHANN

It won't happen again, sir.  
You can rely on me.  
(almost whispering)  
I swear it.

The CAPTAIN eyes him wearily, then nods.

CAPTAIN

Very well, Johann.

A Pause.

JOHANN

No court martial?

CAPTAIN

No court martial.

JOHANN

Captain, I can't tell you how -

CAPTAIN

All right, Johann, hit the sack.

JOHANN nods eagerly, dives through the bulkhead and vanishes into the dim-lit depths of the control room.

The CAPTAIN returns to his patrol log.

Closeup of his hand. He is writing: "0700. Return to base..."

173. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

A distance shot, breathtakingly atmospheric. It is very early in the morning, before sunrise.

The mirror-smooth sea resembles an expanse of virgin foil. An iridescent golden glow is ousting the shades of night and gradually filling the sky.

The boat's wake curves away in a wide arc: U96 is turning, heading for home at a steady cruising speed - aiming her bow at the splendor of the eastern horizon...

174. INT

BOAT/WARDROOM

DAY

Petty Officer Telegraphist HINRICH calls loudly down the passage.

HINRICH (OFF)

Cipher Officer!

The SECOND LIEUTENANT tumbles out of his bunk, hair disheveled, and stares sleepily round the wardroom. The CAPTAIN and OFFICERS are already breakfasting.

CAPTAIN (grumpily)

Nice of you to join us.

The SECOND LIEUTENANT collects his wits.

SECOND LIEUTENANT

Morning, Sir.

CAPTAIN

All right, Number Two, look sharp. Officer's signal.

The SECOND LIEUTENANT comes to life with a jerk. He takes the slip of paper from HINRICH, puts the decoding machine on the table and gets started.

Everyone eyes the gadget with secret apprehension.

CAPTAIN

Secret and confidential, eh?  
Must be another party coming up.  
Not for us, though - we're ripe  
for a refit.

CHIEF ENGINEER

And low on fuel. We don't have  
enough to get us back to La  
Rochelle.

CAPTAIN

Simple, Chief. We'll sail the last  
hundred miles.

The SECOND LIEUTENANT is working away, flushed with mental effort.

CAPTAIN (sulkily)

How much longer are you going to be?

The SECOND LIEUTENANT looks up at him, then back at the signal.

CAPTAIN

Well, what is it?

SECOND LIEUTENANT (dumbfounded)

Captain's eyes only.

The CAPTAIN promptly clamps the decoding machine under his arm, vanishes into his cubbyhole and draws the curtain.

Everyone looks at each other.

SECOND LIEUTNANT

Never seen one of those before.  
Triple encoding!

They all stare eagerly at the drawn curtain. We hear the CAPTAIN moving around behind it.

CAPTAIN (OFF)

Number One, here a minute.

The FIRST LIEUTNANT squares his shoulders and marches off, looking self-important. He disappears behind the curtain.

Low voices and a rustle of paper.

CHIEF ENGINEER (whispers)

There's something brewing.

175. INT

BOAT/BOW COMPARTMENT

DAY

High spirits and laughter.

Everyone is scrubbing, polishing, tidying up.

The compartment is noticeably less cramped now that the torpedoes have gone.

Several men are bawling a song to BOCKSTIEGEL's squeezebox accompaniment.

CHORUS

The women of the desert have tits  
two meters long, so tie 'em in a  
sheepshank before you do them  
wrong...

Fists come crashing down on an upturned crate: ARI0, DUFTE and SCHWALLE are playing cards.

ARIO

Jesus, think of it - Christmas in  
La Rochelle! No more hand jobs for me...

SCHWALLE

Yes, think of it. All those yummy little  
girl auxiliaries, all those sexy little  
nurses...

ARIO

I'm going to screw till it drops off...

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DUFTE sniggers and WILLIBERT stops scrubbing. His face becomes transfigured.

WILLIBERT

Know what I'm looking forward to?  
A nice, long, leisurely afternoon  
fuck...

Lascivious moans.

Then the public address system clicks on.

CAPTAIN (loudspeaker)

Now hear this!

Silence falls at once.

ARIO

His master's voice!

CAPTAIN (loudspeaker)

La Rochelle's out, I'm afraid.  
We've been given a new port of  
destination: La Spezia. As you  
know, that's in the Mediterranean.  
We'll be taking on supplies at Vigo,  
in Northern Spain. That's all.

Another click, then silence.

The whole compartment congeals into a living tableau.

Eventually, ARIO breaks the spell.

ARIO (white with anger)

S h i t !

DUFTE stares at his slice of bread and sausage as if it has  
been thrust into his hand by a leper.

DUFTE

They must be crazy...

ARIO (upping the ante)

S h i t ! S h i t !

SCHWALLE

There goes our Christmas fuck.  
No girl auxiliaries, no nurses...

ARIO (slamming his cards down)  
S h i t   a n d   d a m n a t i o n !

WILLIBERT

Christmas in Macaroni-land. Just  
what I've always wanted.

ARIO (snarls)

We've got to get there first, you  
dumb ox.

WILLIBERT

What do you mean?

ARIO

You don't know you're born, do you?  
G i b r a l t a r, man! The Strait's  
as tight as a virgin's pussy. Any  
U-boat wants to get past Gibraltar  
better be smeared with Vaseline.

Silence.

Only now, it seems, do many of those present grasp the full  
significance of what lies ahead.

176. EXT

BOAT/BRIDGE

DAY

A cool, clear day. Sunlight glints on a pale green sea..

The foaming bow-wave curves aside as U 96 slices through the  
swell. First Watch are manning the bridge. The QUARTERMASTER  
is taking a sunshot with his sextant while the WAR CORRESPON-  
DENT stands beside him.

QUARTERMASTER

The Mediterranean - they must be out  
of their minds. It's swarming with  
British ships.

He fiddles with the sextant and squints at it, reading off  
the figures with barely suppressed anger. Then he nods at  
the "conservatory". The CAPTAIN is leaning against the rail,  
talking quietly to the CHIEF ENGINEER.

QUARTERMASTER

You can't help feeling sorry for the Chief. His last patrol - and now Gibraltar.

(giving the WAR CORRESPONDENT an enigmatic look)

If you want to get sunk, it's the ideal spot...

So saying, he climbs through the upper hatch and disappears below. The WAR CORRESPONDENT stares pensively out to sea. The CAPTAIN comes up and leans against the bridge casing beside him.

CAPTAIN

I'm putting you ashore at Vigo. You and the Chief both.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT stares at him open-mouthed.

WAR CORRESPONDENT

But -

CAPTAIN

Don't play the hero, Lieutenant. The signal's on its way. I've requested a replacement for the Chief.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT looks back at the sea, bewildered.

CAPTAIN

They'll smuggle you back through Spain somehow or other.

(grins)

Dressed up as gypsies, for all I care.

WAR CORRESPONDENT

But -

CAPTAIN

No buts. Two are a better bet than one. I've given it careful thought. We've got agents there - they'll get you out.

A long pause.

Finally, the CAPTAIN jerks his head at the CHIEF ENGINEER, who is still in the "conservatory".

CAPTAIN (quietly)

His wife's dying.

(to the WAR CORRESPONDENT, emphatically)

I've got to put him ashore.

WAR CORRESPONDENT (nods)

Aye-aye, Sir.

He walks to the upper hatch and climbs through. The CAPTAIN turns to face the sea again.

In the background, the CHIEF ENGINEER is staring into the distance. CAMERA holds on both men for some time.

Silence apart from the subdued murmur of the waves and the peaceful drone of the engines.

177. INT                      BOAT/P.O.s' MESS                      DAY

Ensign ULLMANN is perched on the edge of his bunk with his hands dangling limply between his knees - the picture of dejection. The WAR CORRESPONDENT ducks through the bulkhead and sits down facing him. They are alone in the compartment.

A prolonged silence. ULLMANN avoids his eye.

WAR CORRESPONDENT

Bad news, eh?

ULLMANN says nothing, just nods curtly.

WAR CORRESPONDENT

I'm getting off at Vigo. So's the Chief - the Old Man wants it that way.

(discreetly, after another pause)

Shall I - take your letters with me?

ULLMANN stares at him.

WAR CORRESPONDENT

It'd be better than nothing.

ULLMANN reflects. Then a smile flits across his face. He nods.

178. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

The sea is shrouded in fog. Swaths of it drift by.

Then a vague shape carves its way through the gloom: U 96.

She glides across the oily calm like a ghost ship...

179. EXT

SEA/BRIDGE

DAY

First Watch on the bridge. The CAPTAIN, QUARTERMASTER and WAR CORRESPONDENT are peering ahead over the bridge casing. Everyone is on edge - fraught with suppressed tension.

CAPTAIN (gruffly).

God knows where we are.

The QUARTERMASTER lowers his glasses, looking harassed.

QUARTERMASTER

Near the coast, Sir, that's for sure.

CAPTAIN (impatiently)

But where?

QUARTERMASTER (apologetically)

It's hard to make a perfect landfall in these conditions.

CAPTAIN

Yes, yes, I know.

Pause. The engines drone idly along. The hiss of the bow-wave sounds very remote.

The stillness is broken by a sudden harsh scream. Everyone jumps. Dark shapes burst through the mist and circle the boat: gulls...

They crane their necks and stare fixedly down at the bridge.

CAPTAIN

Get lost, you brutes!

He glares at them, then raises his binoculars again and peers through the mist: gray nothingness.

Suddenly he tenses: he has spotted something.

CAPTAIN

There's something there!

The WAR CORRESPONDENT aims his glasses in the same direction. They steady on a particular spot.



Through the glasses: an object swiftly takes shape in the gray soup: a fishing boat crosses the U-boat's bow and glides silently into the mist.

CAPTAIN

Fishermen.

(grins)

We could always ask them where we are.

Surreptitious chuckles at the QUARTERMASTER's expense, then silence again.

A light breeze springs up and the swaths of mist begin to disperse.

The air is charged with strange expectancy.

The whitish shreds of vapor swirl higher still, to reveal - quite suddenly - an unexpected and dramatic sight: a line of rugged cliffs looms out of the mist.

CAPTAIN (taken aback).

Stop both engines!

The blub-blub of the diesels dies away, the bow-wave subsides, the bridge begins to rock.

A spellbound silence.

They all stare avidly through their glasses. Their first sight of land in many weeks ...

We can vaguely distinguish a bay of some kind.

CAPTAIN (quietly)

The approaches to Vigo.

Not a sound.

Tension on the bridge.

Binoculars scan the coastline, which is slowly being re-engulfed by swaths of mist.

CAPTAIN

Well done, Quartermaster. We're just where we ought to be.

(loudly)

Diving stations!

Everyone hurries below.

180. EXT

SEA/BOAT

DAY

Bubbles come swirling up and froth round the hull.

U 96 slowly submerges. The sea closes over the gratings, the conning tower sinks into the depths.

Isolated patches of turbulence linger, then disappear. The boat has vanished without trace...

181. INT

BOAT/CONTROL ROOM

DAY

Muted orders, otherwise silence. All hands are at diving stations. The CHIEF ENGINEER is sitting behind the PLANESMEN, the WAR CORRESPONDENT, FIRST LIEUTENANT and SECOND LIEUTENANT standing beneath the lower hatch, the CAPTAIN and QUARTERMASTER bending over the chart table.

The boat sways slightly, then steadies.

CHIEF ENGINEER

Thirty meters, Sir. Boat trimmed.

The CAPTAIN leaves the chart table, tilts his cap back and looks round thoughtfully.

CAPTAIN

Listen a minute.

All eyes turn in his direction.

CAPTAIN

The next bit could be tricky. Vigo's a Spanish port and Spain's neutral, as you know.

He sniffs and grins.

CAPTAIN

In other words, our presence here isn't officially welcome.

Pause. Everyone looks at each other.

CAPTAIN

We'll wait till nightfall, then we'll sneak into harbor through the north entrance - submerged.

Long pause.

SECOND LIEUTENANT

Oh boy!

CAPTAIN (nods)

Exactly. No lights, no fix points, no approach buoys.

QUARTERMASTER (scratching his beard)  
Tricky ...

CAPTAIN

Yes, tricky.

(pause)

The ship that's scheduled to top us up is the "Weser". She's a German merchantman - got herself interned in Vigo harbor.

(grins)

With a bellyful of torpedoes, ammunition, fuel and supplies.

CHIEF ENGINEER

Very convenient.

QUARTERMASTER

How do we locate her in the dark? The harbor must be swarming with freighters.

CAPTAIN

Good question. I don't know myself - they're supposed to flash us a signal.

Silence. More surreptitious glances are exchanged. The CAPTAIN looks round the compartment.

CAPTAIN

Well?

QUARTERMASTER (a wry grin)

Anything for a change.

CAPTAIN (drawls)

P r e c i s e l y.

182. EXT

VIGO

NIGHT

Slow pan across Vigo Bay.

A dark night and a calm sea. Specks of light are dancing on the ripples.

In the distance, the outlines of a range of hills.

Bulky shadows glide past - ships lying at anchor. The dark, menacing silhouettes of anchored freighters become more and more bunched.

Then an unreal mirage effect: the lights of a wharf with ships lying alongside sparkle like a diamond necklace, reflected a thousandfold by the waters of the harbor. We see tiny derricks, gawky-looking cranes, toy automobiles, miniature streetcars. Vigo, a city at peace in a world at war...

CAMERA continues to pan across the glittering lights and into the gloom of the day.

Silence apart from the muted chugging of small craft and the clank of a dredger.

A soft rushing sound, accompanied by turbulence. Bubbles come frothing up. Then, with a sudden powerful surge, a dark shape breaks surface immediately in front of the CAMERA.

Water streams off the glistening monster. It rocks and then lies still.

U 96 has surfaced.

183. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

Dim figures in the darkened compartment, heads close together.

The CAPTAIN and QUARTERMASTER climb the ladder.

Silence. Every eye is focused on the lower hatch.

CAPTAIN (OFF, quietly)

Slow ahead both main motors.  
Port ten.

The motors emit a gentle hum.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT is standing beside the conning tower ladder, looking up. We see a disc of dark sky through the hatch. Dimly lit by the glow from his instruments, the HELMSMAN's face looks pale and tense.

QUARTERMASTER (OFF)

Plenty of traffic round here

CAPTAIN (OFF)

We'd better not run anyone down,  
that's all.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT feels a touch on his shoulder, and turns. Ensing ULLMANN slips him a bundle of letters neatly tied with string. The WAR CORRESPONDENT grins. ULLMANN smiles...

CAPTAIN (OFF)

Now to pick out the right tub.

Silence. The men below are all ears. Suddenly:

QUARTERMASTER (OFF)

There! There, Captain!

CAPTAIN (OFF)

Where?

QUARTERMASTER (OFF)

There! They're signalling!

The men below hold their breath.

CAPTAIN (OFF, whispering)

Half ahead both. Port twenty.

184. EXT

VIGO

NIGHT

Long shot:

U 96 is gliding through a myriad coruscating pinpoints of light. She stands out sharply against the glow of the waterfront, then moves into the darkness of the bay.

Ships float past in silhouette like sleeping giants. All at once, in the midst of a particularly bulky shadow, a speck of light. It comes and goes, comes and goes...

We distinguish the outlines of a big ship with brightly illuminated deckhouses and a warm glow coming from her portholes.

U 96 slowly approaches the "Weser", glides into her dark lee and disappears from view.

Absolute silence.

185. INT

WESER/SALOON

NIGHT

The saloon doors swing open like the gates of paradise.

The men from U 96 stand there, stunned by a scene of dream-like unreality: snow-white tablecloths, vases of flowers, polished mahogany bulkheads, dainty pinch-pleated curtains, handsome furniture, ankle-deep carpets...

To cap it all, the German national anthem rings out. Posed in the center of the saloon are a group of immaculately uniformed men: the ship's officers and their SKIPPER. All are holding glasses and singing with patriotic fervor.

A bizarre contrast: facing them are five pale, shabby figures with their mouths hanging open in amazement...

A steward in a white jacket hands round a trayful of champagne glasses. Still bemused, the visitors help themselves...

A final sustained chord, and "Deutschland über alles" comes to an end. The Weser's SKIPPER, a corpulent gentleman, raises his glass.

SKIPPER

A toast to the gallant members  
of Admiral Dönitz's command:  
Sieg - heil!

ALL

Sieg - heil ! Sieg - heil!

The SKIPPER seizes the hand of the FIRST LIEUTENANT, who is better turned out than his ragged companions.

SKIPPER (beaming)

Welcome aboard, Captain.

The FIRST LIEUTENANT stares at him, dumbfounded. The CAPTAIN gives a crooked grin.

FIRST LIEUTENANT

No, er - I mean, this is the  
Captain.

SKIPPER

Oh - so sorry.

He pumps the CAPTAIN's hand.

SKIPPER

Welcome aboard the Weser, Captain.

He has already raised his glass again.

## SKIPPER

Gentlemen, before we get down to business, permit me to say a few words. I can't tell you how proud I am to welcome you as our guests. You are the men whose daring deeds so often hold us spellbound when we sit round the radio and listen, with hearts beating high, to reports of the triumphant successes of our German U-boat arm. You are a shining example to the younger generation. Your discipline, team spirit and total commitment will always be a model and object lesson to us all...

The CAPTAIN stands there looking sheepish - disheveled hair, matted beard, tattered sweater. He stares at the SKIPPER as if confronted by a supernatural apparition.

## SKIPPER

Our German U-boat crews are the world's finest and most efficient fighting men - rightly feared and admired throughout the globe. To you only one thing counts: achievement. Achievement in the service of an ideal, in the service of your Fatherland, and - naturally - in the service of our beloved Führer, Adolf Hitler.

The SECOND LIEUTENANT's impish face twitches slightly - he is finding it hard to contain himself. A surreptitious glance at the FIRST LIEUTENANT reveals that he is listening with devout attention.

## SKIPPER

Out there on the high seas, your spirit of aggression, your toughness and selfsacrifice are making a unique contribution to our country's final victory over the hated British. On that note, gentlemen, a hearty welcome to you all.

General applause. The SKIPPER smiles broadly. The CAPTAIN continues to stand there in bemused silence. The SKIPPER jovially puts an arm round his shoulders and steers him to another part of the saloon. Everyone else tags along.

SKIPPER

We've naturally done our best to give you the reception you deserve, gentlemen. A little taste of home, so to speak.

The CAPTAIN musters a grin. He looks awkward and ill at ease.

SKIPPER

Our ship's bakery has been working flat out since dawn. Cakes, fresh bread -

(proudly)

Christmas cakes too, of course.

A long buffet is laden with every kind of cold sliced meat, a cornucopian selection of fruit - pineapples, grapes, oranges - and gems of the baker's art. There is also French cognac, Spanish wine, German beer...

SKIPPER

I can recommend the sausages - the pork was only slaughtered this morning... And how about these: fresh figs!

The men from U 96 marvel at these delicacies in stunned silence. The SKIPPER beams, his officers grin and wink at each other.

CAPTAIN (dumbfounded)

Fresh figs... Never had 'em before...

He takes one and unceremoniously sinks his teeth in it. The CHIEF ENGINEER grabs a white roll and does likewise. The crust disintegrates.

Everyone laughs.

The CAPTAIN's gaze is vacant and hollow-eyed. He looks utterly spent.



186. EXTBOAT/DECKNIGHT

The "Weser's" cargo hatch emits a faint glow.

Shadowy figures are hard at work toting crates, sacks of oranges, bunches of bananas, loaves of bread...

Whispered orders keep the whole operation moving in double quick time. A human chain passes the supplies across the gangway, onto the casing and down the U-boat's galley hatch.

DUFTE pauses to stare at something on his hand. WILLIBERT stares at it too.

DUFTE (softly)

Whassat?

He examines it in the light from the portholes.

WILLIBERT

Well, I'll be - a Christmas tree!

187. INTWESER/SALOONNIGHT

Bright lights and a convivial atmosphere.

SKIPPER

Prost, gentlemen. We're only young once.

Glasses are drained.

The CAPTAIN, still pale and exhausted, is slumped in an armchair. He munches away with a beer in his hand, surrounded by an admiring circle of ship's officers.

SKIPPER

Well, Captain, don't be bashful.  
What sort of patrol have you had?

(a dazzling smile)

We're itching to know.

Everyone hangs on the CAPTAIN's words. He fidgets, looking perceptibly embarrassed and ill at ease.

CAPTAIN (grins ruefully)

They really had us by the balls  
this time. You wouldn't believe  
what a boat like ours can take.

The SKIPPER's reverent nod conveys total comprehension.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT, SECOND LIEUTENANT and CHIEF ENGINEER  
are standing at the buffet, eating and surveying the scene.  
The SECOND LIEUTENANT, who is guzzling hard, suddenly stops  
chewing.

Two men in trenchcoats have entered the saloon. They remove  
their felt hats and glance swiftly round like plainclothesmen  
in search of a suspect. A bizarre-looking duo...

SKIPPER (making introductions)

Herr Seewald, representing our  
naval attaché in Madrid.

Everyone stands up and shakes hands. More chairs are brought.  
The taller of the newcomers bows formally and hands the  
CAPTAIN an envelope.

They all sit down. The CAPTAIN opens the envelope and skims  
through its contents. The saloon is filled with an expectant  
hush. For a few moments, all we can hear is the rustle of  
paper. The three at the buffet exchange glances. The CAPTAIN  
stiffens and stares at his reading matter, white with anger.  
Then he heaves himself out of his armchair, jerks his head  
at the CHIEF ENGINEER and WAR CORRESPONDENT, and stomps off.

After a few paces, he turns.

CAPTAIN (mumbles)

Going to stretch our legs.

He stalks out of the saloon, stiff-legged, leaving a room-  
ful of raised eyebrows behind.

188. EXT

WESER/DECK

NIGHT

Dim figures can be seen on the gratings below, looking up.  
A shiny silver monster is being lowered down the side -  
a torpedo reload.

The CAPTAIN, CHIEF ENGINEER and WAR CORRESPONDENT walk over to the rail and watch. Their faces are almost indistinguishable in the darkness.

Silence, then:

CAPTAIN

Request denied, Chief -  
Headquarters says no. You'll  
have to stay aboard. You too,  
Lieutenant.

The CHIEF ENGINEER doesn't move. His saturnine face registers no change of expression. The WAR CORRESPONDENT keeps his mouth clamped shut.

CAPTAIN (quietly)

I'm sorry.

Silence. All three stare down at the boat.

Muffled guffaws from the saloon.

CHIEF ENGINEER

It's probably just as well.

The CAPTAIN glances at him in surprise.

CHIEF ENGINEER

I mean, who knows what kind of  
a Chief they'd have wished on you?

(grins)

Another tight-ass, maybe...

CAPTAIN (gruffly)

That's a point.

A long pause.

WAR CORRESPONDENT (an attempt at grim humor)

I've never been to the Mediterranean.  
They say the climate's -

CAPTAIN (cuts him short)

I told you, Lieutenant, no mock  
heroics. You don't know what it  
means, getting past Gibraltar.

Another pause. They look down at the boat again. The torpedo slides smoothly into its hatch and disappears.

The CAPTAIN raises his head and gazes into the darkness.

CAPTAIN (thoughtfully)

I don't know... This place smells, somehow.

The other two stare at him.

CAPTAIN

Three boats took an supplies here recently. Two of them were sunk as soon as they cleared the coast. Odd, wouldn't you say?

Pause. He continues to stare into space.

CAPTAIN

All these comic opera sailors in natty uniforms - and the naval attaché's errand boys...

(a wry grin)

Not my kind of people. Who knows if they all keep mum about what goes on here? It could easily leak out.

He looks at the CHIEF ENGINEER, who is pensively scratching his beard.

CAPTAIN

I think we'll ditch their schedule and cast off as soon as we can.

The CHIEF ENGINEER nods.

They all look over the rail again. Hoarse but muffled singing issues from the bowels of U 96.

CAPTAIN (to himself)

Funny thing - I'll be glad when I'm back on board again.

(he sniffs)

Not my scene, all this.

He gazes down at his command with an almost radiant expression.

The CHIEF ENGINEER and WAR CORRESPONDENT exchange a covert smile.

189. EXTVIGONIGHT

Long shot of the harbor at night.

Silence apart from the distant squeak of cranes and throb of winch engines.

Slowly, a shadow detaches itself from the dark bulk of the "Weser". U 96 gets silently under way. Her black silhouette glides across the glittering waterfront.

Bubbles come frothing up. With a hiss, the hull settles lower and the forecasing dips. Finally, the conning tower sinks into the dark waters of the bay.

A few lingering bubbles, then nothing. U 96 has disappeared.

In the distance, the shimmering lights of the seaport.

A peaceful sight...

190. EXTSEA/BOATDAY

Panoramic distance shot: a grandiose display of color. Huge cloudcastles are towering in the sky, pierced and fringed with brilliant yellow by slanting rays of sunlight.

U 96 is forging through the Atlantic under full power. Her pearly white wake glitters in the sun before dispersing and vanishing into the immensity of water astern.

191. INTBOAT/CONTROL ROOMDAY

CAMERA tracks slowly toward the chart and into closeup. We can clearly distinguish the Strait of Gibraltar.

Silence apart from the CAPTAIN's unemotional voice. He is lecturing with the aid of a pencil.

CAPTAIN (OFF)

Seven miles from shore to shore.

(pauses)

A tight squeeze by any standards.

His pencil taps the Rock.

CAPTAIN (OFF)

Here's the Britishers' dockyard - the only one capable of repairing their Mediterranean fleet. It's bound to be strongly defended.

He points to a semicircle of crosshatching in front of the Strait.

CAPTAIN (OFF)

Scores of patrol boats - corvettes, destroyers... They use anything that floats to keep the Strait sewn up tight.

He draws a line straight through the security zone and into the corridor beyond.

CAPTAIN (OFF)

Through there, that's where we're going. Now you know.

He puts the pencil down and turns.

The compartment is crowded with officers, control-room personnel and many of the crew.

CAPTAIN

Well, any comments?

Silence. Pensive expressions. Finally:

SECOND LIEUTENANT

Gibraltar, where the mellow beauty of the Mediterranean meets the raw vigor of the Atlantic...

Everyone looks at him in surprise.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (grins broadly)

That's what it says in the Manual of Seamanship.

Subdued chuckles, then silence. All eyes turn back to the CAPTAIN. He stares at the deckhead and noisily scratches his beard. The CHIEF ENGINEER and the WAR CORRESPONDENT exchange a glance: no interruptions - the Old Man is thinking...

CAPTAIN

We'll run in under cover of darkness - on the surface, straight through the British patrol lines - get as far as we possibly can.

(pause)

Then we'll dive and drift through.

He looks down again, thrusts out his lower lip and falls silent.

Inquiring glances circulate. What does he mean?

CAPTAIN

Thing is, there are two currents in the Strait - a surface current flowing from the Atlantic into the Mediterranean and a low-level current flowing the other way. They're both quite strong.

An interminable pause. More covert glances.

CAPTAIN

So we'll dive and hitch a ride on the surface current. That way, we won't make a racket and save fuel at the same time.

End of explanation. He looks round.

CAPTAIN

Well, Kriechbaum?

QUARTERMASTER (grins)

Not bad, sir.

The CAPTAIN thrusts out his lower lip again and gives a contented nod.

Silence.

Raucous singing drifts in from the bow compartment:

CHORUS

There limped through the burning  
Sahara a poor syphilitic old whore.  
He whipped out his red-hot banana  
and soon she was begging for more.

CAPTAIN

Hm, Arab week - must be because  
we're heading south.

(grins)

Nothing like music for boosting  
morale...

192. EXT

SEA/BOAT

NIGHT

U 96 is gliding peacefully along, engines droning, hull caressed by her whispering bow-wave.

Very little wind. The sluggish swell gleams softly in diffused moonlight. The skyline is blurred - shrouded in mist.

An eerie night...

Suddenly, the note of the engines falters. With a final gurgle, it dies away altogether, to be replaced by an ominous silence.

The boat loses way and drifts to a standstill. It bobs there leisurely with wafelets splashing against its ballast tanks.

193. EXT

BOAT/BRIDGE

NIGHT

A breathless hush.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT joins the CAPTAIN. Tremulously, his binoculars scan the darkness. Nothing to be seen, just shimmering water and an indistinct horizon. But then, with the shock effect of an ice-cold hand in the small of the back, dark shapes etch themselves into the mist: the dark and menacing silhouettes of warships - destroyers.

The CAPTAIN lowers his glasses.

CAPTAIN (calmly)

This is it.

The QUARTERMASTER nods. THE CAPTAIN turns.

CAPTAIN

Half ahead both main motors.  
Quartermaster, you stay up here  
with me. Remainder, clear the  
bridge.

The LOOKOUTS and the WAR CORRESPONDENT hurry down the ladder into the control room.

With a liquid whisper, the boat gets slowly and silently under way.

Not a sound from the motors.

The CAPTAIN and QUARTERMASTER stare straight ahead. After a lengthy silence:



CAPTAIN (quietly)

How does it smell to you, Kriechbaum?

QUARTERMASTER

We'll make it, sir.

Pause.

CAPTAIN (grins at him)

Anything for a change, eh?

QUARTERMASTER (grins back)

P r e c i s e l y ....

194. INT

BOAT/CONTROL ROOM

NIGHT

A distant hum of electric motors. Somewhere, condensation drips into the bilge.

The tension is almost tangible.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT paces to and fro. Finally, he sits down on the chart chest and watches the LOOKOUTS. They are standing below the hatch, listening.

We hear the CAPTAIN's muffled voice.

CAPTAIN (OFF)

Hard-a-starboard. Steer  
zero-seven-zero.

The HELMSMAN quietly acknowledges from inside the conning tower.

HELSMAN (OFF)

Zero-seven-zero, sir.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT draws a deep breath and leans back, looking at the deckhead. Innumerable bunches of bananas are dangling from lengths of cord strung across the compartment.

Then he glances at his watch: 10.15 p.m.

195. EXTBOAT/BRIDGENIGHT

Two bearded profiles in the darkness. The CAPTAIN is looking to starboard, the QUARTERMASTER to port. Their faces are impassive - devoid of excitement.

Suddenly, the QUARTERMASTER stiffens and raises his binoculars. Nothing but mist at first. Then a big destroyer glides past. Pinpoints of red and green light move steadily through the gloom...

QUARTERMASTER (quietly)

Destroyer on the port beam, sir.  
Range about one thousand meters.

CAPTAIN

What's she doing? Is she closing?

Through binoculars: the destroyer recedes silently into the mist.

QUARTERMASTER

No, drawing aft.

CAPTAIN

Well, then.

196. INTBOAT/BOW COMPARTMENTNIGHT

Silence reigns.

WILLIBERT is filing his nails, BOCKSTIEGEL tidying his bunk, the PREACHER mumbling to himself.

HAGEN is stealthily at work on the torpedo tubes, checking this and that.

DUFTE lies in the dim recesses of his bunk, looking at the photos of his girlfriend. She really isn't anything to write home about...

197. EXTBOAT/BRIDGENIGHT

Through the CAPTAIN's binoculars: several warships in the mist. A jumble of navigation lights, and there, in the distance, another two destroyers: dark shapes visible against a lighter sky.

CAPTAIN (murmurs)

They've turned out half the Royal Navy.

(calling softly below)  
Port twenty.

HELMSMAN (whispering back)  
Port twenty, sir.

The CAPTAIN stares intently through his glasses.

CAPTAIN

Very gentlemanly of them. They're all showing their navigation lights.

198. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

Closeup of the clock face: 10.30...

The WAR CORRESPONDENT is pacing up and down, the LOOKOUTS are still beneath the lower hatch.

WICHMANN runs a comb through his greasy hair for the umpteenth time.

TURBO (a sarcastic undertone)

That's right, ducky, look your best.  
They say the British like a nice piece of ass.

Muffled sniggers. For a moment, the tension subsides.

Then silence again.

Everyone stares up at the deckhead, motionless.

199. EXT                      BOAT/BRIDGE                      NIGHT

Silence.

The QUARTERMASTER lowers his glasses and peers into the darkness without them, then quickly raises them again. They show us two corvettes moving slowly past to port.

The QUARTERMASTER heaves a sigh of relief.

CAPTAIN

Well, Kriechbaum?  
Quite exciting, eh?

QUARTERMASTER (clears his throat)  
That's one way of putting it.

Pause.

Suddenly, he gives a start. The CAPTAIN is humming a tune...

200. INT                      BOAT/VARIOUS COMPARTMENTS      NIGHT

The WAR CORRESPONDENT is finding the suspense unbearable. He makes his way through the forward bulkhead, the wardroom and C.P.O.s' Mess. A deathly hush reigns everywhere. Some men are reading, others sitting around staring at nothing in particular.

He tries the door to the head: locked. He paces restlessly up and down, then stops and peers into the C.P.O.s' Mess.

The BOSUN is furtively extracting something from the back of his bunk; an escape kit. He checks it with trembling hands, unaware that he is being observed...

201. EXT                      BOAT/BRIDGE                      NIGHT

Through binoculars, a traumatic sight: a giant destroyer looms out of the mist, heading straight for U96.

CAPTAIN (hisses)

Hard-a-port, full ahead both!  
Quick as you can!

HELMSMAN (OFF)

Hard-a-port, full ahead both,  
sir.

CAPTAIN

Damn, damn!

202. INT BOAT/OUTSIDE HEAD NIGHT

The WAR CORRESPONDENT is perched on a crate in the passage, staring into space. We sense his agony of fear.

The door of the head opens and a pale, perspiring face emerges. It is JOHANN. He avoids the WAR CORRESPONDENT's eye and disappears without a word...

203. EXT BOAT/BRIDGE NIGHT

The CAPTAIN lowers his glasses, open-mouthed. For some seconds, he stares straight ahead.

CAPTAIN (excitedly)

Kriechbaum!

The QUARTERMASTER joins him from the after part of the bridge. The CAPTAIN points and he raises his glasses. They reveal a fantastic sight: far away, jutting steeply out of the mist, looms a strange conformation - a dark mass silhouetted against the night sky...

CAPTAIN (OFF)

Gibraltar!

Opposite, barely distinguishable in the haze, is the African coast.

Silence on the bridge. Both men stare spellbound through their binoculars.

At last, the CAPTAIN turns to the conning tower hatch.

CAPTAIN (calling softly below)

Pass the word. We dive in ten minutes.

204. INT BOAT/CONTROL ROOM NIGHT

Excitement spreads, figures flit past. A whisper runs the length of the boat: Dive in ten minutes!

The CHIEF ENGINEER takes his place behind the PLANESMEN. The WAR CORRESPONDENT's tense, agitated face appears in the bulkhead doorway.

205. EXT

BOAT/BRIDGE

NIGHT

Tight closeup of the CAPTAIN's face and dilated eyes. A spine-chilling yell:

CAPTAIN

A l a r m !

The QUARTERMASTER makes an acrobatic dive for the upper hatch, the CAPTAIN hurls himself to the deck.

A horrifying sight: a dark shape swoops out of the night sky and streaks toward the boat - an airplane. The roar of its engines rises to a malevolent scream.

A bomb falls away...

With a blinding flash and an earsplitting detonation, the boat's main gun is blown from its mounting and sent spinning through the air.

Another explosion, only yards abreast of the boat. A huge column of water sprouts from the sea.

U 96 is hurled on her side.

206. INT

BOAT/CONTROL ROOM

NIGHT

A chorus of piercing yells. Everything and everyone goes flying.

VOICE

D i v e - d i v e - d i v e !

Utter chaos. The scene is obscured by clouds of smoke...

The QUARTERMASTER slothors down the conning tower and crashes to the deck plates.

Shouts and whimpers from the after compartments...

Air escapes from the ballast tanks with a thunderous roar.

TURBO (yells)

Where's the Captain?

A crimson face appears in the upper hatch.

CAPTAIN. (calling below)

Belay that diving order!  
Stop flooding, damn you!

Water is already gushing over him and streaming down the conning tower.

CAPTAIN (gasping for breath)

Blow! Blow everything! Stand by your escape gear and prepare to abandon ship!

A sea of distraught, anguished faces. Total confusion. Compressed air hisses back into the ballast tanks.

CAPTAIN

Stop main motors! Full ahead both main engines - maximum power! Hard-a-starboard-steer one-eight-zero!

The diesels start up with a diabolical roar. The whole compartment shudders.

Shouted orders ring through the boat: S t a n d b y y o u r e s c a p e g e a r !" Violent turmoil in the control room, clouds of smoke, men struggling into life jackets....

207. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      NIGHT

U 96 forges south at maximum revs, engines blaring. Her bow knives through the sea, her wake boils...

208. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

Faces contorted and eyes darting with terror. A chorus of hoarse cries:

"What's he up to?" - "Abandon ship!"  
- "Swim for it!" - "One-eight-zero -  
We're heading for the African  
coast!"

209. EXT                      BOAT /BRIDGE                      NIGHT

The engines continue to pound and roar. The CAPTAIN is clinging to the bridge casing, his whole body vibrating.

CAPTAIN

Faster, faster! Let's see what you're made of!

210. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

Shrill cries from aft:  
E n g i n e   r o o m   m a k i n g   w a t e r !  
M o t o r   r o o m   m a k i n g   w a t e r !  
Figures mill around, nervously fumbling with their life  
jackets and escape gear.

211. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      NIGHT

A scene of haunting beauty.

A star shell soars into the air and bursts, bathing the sea  
in brilliant magnesium-white light for seconds on end.

More shells soar after it, adding to the glare.

U 96 plows on through a dazzling world of manmade daylight...

212. EXT                      BOAT/BRIDGE                      NIGHT

The CAPTAIN's face is chalk-white and contorted - gargoyle -  
like.

CAPTAIN (roars)

The swine are firing star  
shells!

213. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

A medley of hoarse, despairing, panic-stricken cries...

1ST VOICE

Motor-room bilge rising fast!



214. EXT BOAT/BRIDGE NIGHT

A look of fierce determination in the CAPTAIN's eyes.

CAPTAIN (calling below)  
Maintain maximum power!

215. INT BOAT/CONTROL ROOM NIGHT

2ND VOICE  
Port engine's stopped!

Magnesium light shines down through the conning tower, picking out pale, ghostly faces in the gloom.

CAPTAIN (OFF)  
Dive-dive-dive!

The upper hatch clangs shut, vents are opened and handwheels spun.

CHIEF ENGINEER (shouts)  
All hands forward!

A body tumbles through the lower hatch and hits the deck plates like a sack of coal - the CAPTAIN. He lies there writhing with pain.

The control room tilts.

All hell breaks loose. Men come stumbling, slithering, blundering through the compartment. Someone's head butts the WAR CORRESPONDENT in the midriff.

VOICE (wails)  
We're sinking!

The CHIEF ENGINEER snatches a look at the depth gauge.

The needle is rotating far too fast.

CAPTAIN (gasps)  
Hard-a-rise, Chief. Try and hold her with the planes and motors!

PLANESMAN (agitatedly)  
Foreplane's jammed!

216. EXT                      UNDER WATER                      NIGHT

Not a sound.

U 96 is plummeting into the depths at an extreme angle, picking up speed as she goes...

217. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

With a trembling hand, the CHIEF ENGINEER keeps his flash-light aimed at the depth gauge. Through a haze of smoke, we see the needle flash past 70 meters, 80, 90...

CAPTAIN

Blow! Blow!

A sharp hiss of compressed air, but the needle goes on turning.

CHIEF ENGINEER (desperately)

Now, pull out!

(bellows)

Pull out, you bitch!

218. EXT                      UNDER WATER                      NIGHT

The boat's outlines are growing blurred. She continues her silent, eerie, headlong, accelerating descent...

219. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

Whimpers, gasps...

CAPTAIN (yells)

All you've got, Chief!

A l l y o u ' v e g o t !

High-pressure air snarls and hisses, but the needle keeps on turning. 110 meters... 120...

Rigid, masklike faces, tormented with fear.

Silence descends on the compartment.

140 meters... 150...

Everyone fixes the depth gauge with an imploring, hypnotic gaze, but in vain. The boat is still going down...

CHIEF ENGINEER (whispers)

I can't hold her.

221. EXT

UNDER WATER

NIGHT

Utter silence.

CHIEF ENGINEER

One-ninety, two hundred,  
two-ten...

The hull creaks and groans. A sharp report rings out, like a pistol shot.

CHIEF ENGINEER (unemotionally)

Passing two-thirty.

More and more shots ring out. Ricochets whine.

Closeup! rivet after rivet is popping...

CHIEF ENGINEER

Two-sixty.

The end.

Faces on the threshold of death! twisted with fear, resigned, insanely contorted...

The WAR CORRESPONDENT has shut his eyes. His lips are trembling uncontrollably.

A voice starts droning in the background!

PREACHER

Yea, though I walk through the  
valley of the shadow of death...

His words are cut short by a bloodcurdling screech - a terrible, jarring crash.

222. EXT                      UNDER WATER                      NIGHT

The noise is beyond belief.

U 96 plows full tilt into the rocky bottom with a harsh squeal and dull rumble of tortured metal. A huge cloud of mud erupts from the point of impact.

223. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

The deck plates jump in their beds, the hull shudders madly, the lights go out.

224. EXT                      UNDER WATER                      NIGHT

A succession of muffled thuds. The boat rumbles, clangs, clatters along the sea-bed. Pandemonium...

225. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

Everyone goes flying.

Whimpers and screams are superimposed on a strident screech that rends the eardrums like a circular saw...

226. EXT                      UNDER WATER                      NIGHT

U 96 continues to scuff the sea-bed with a frightful squeal of metal lacerated by stone. Then the din abruptly ceases.

Silence.

Slowly, the pall of mud clears and the outlines of the hull become visible.

An immensely dramatic spectacle! U 96 is lodged in the rocks, quite motionless.

227. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

Eerie, almost total darkness.

Silence apart from the rasp of breathing and a gurgle of water from some unidentifiable source.

Nothing happens for several seconds. Then the emergency lighting comes on.

The compartment is lying at an angle, stern down.

A tableau of motionless figures with mad, staring eyes ...

CAPTAIN (dryly)

We're there.

Heads are gingerly raised, eyes roam through the bluish haze.

CAPTAIN (wonderingly)

She actually took it.

At this depth!

His eyes seek out the depth gauge. The needle is a long way into the red zone.

CAPTAIN

Two hundred and eighty meters!

(a wry grin)

That's a record. No boat ever went that deep and lived.

As though to underline his words, the interior woodwork gives an ominous groan.

228. INT                      BOAT/ENGINE ROOM                      NIGHT

The floorplates are spattered with blood. FRENSEN is seated on the bulkhead coaming with a deep wound over one eye.

The others are trembling - numb with shock.

JOHANN rises to his feet and walks slowly down the aisle between the engines.

Signs of damage everywhere! cracked conduits, burst pipes, broken machine parts...

He stops to listen. A gentle hissing sound can be heard.

A look of horror dawns in JOHANN's eyes. Water is seeping through joints, percolating hull valves, forcing its way through vents...

229. INT                      BOAT/MOTOR ROOM                      NIGHT

The petty officers are standing there transfixed. Water is seeping in under pressure at more and more points, here with a soft hiss, there with a high-pitched musical note - malign and insidious...

230. INT                      BOAT/ENGINE ROOM                      NIGHT

JOHANN gives a start. A jet of water knifes across the compartment - and another.

In quick succession, joints are cracking, pipes bursting, valves giving way.

The boat is being invaded by an elemental force...

231. INT                      BOAT/MOTOR ROOM                      NIGHT

Water is spurting into the compartment from all sides with a hiss like escaping steam.

Hoarse, panic-stricken cries: C o o l i n g - w a t e r  
p i p e f r a c t u r e d ! - S e a t i n g s a w a s h !

232. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

Shouts and isolated phrases. A terrible pandemonium from the engine and motor rooms.

CAPTAIN (curtly)

Damage reports - I must have  
accurate damage reports!

A waste of breath. Everyone is out of control. Men scurry through the compartment, tools clatter on deck plates.

CAPTAIN (yells)

Jesus Christ Almighty!  
When do I get some damage  
reports?

The WAR CORRESPONDENT reels past, borne along by a tide of frightened humanity.

Flashlight beams pierce the gloomy haze, picking out gaping mouths and faces like tragic masks ...

Several men are toiling away under the CONTROL-ROOM P.O.'s supervision, lungs pumping with exertion.

Then comes a monotonous singsong!

PREACHER

Wonderful will that day be, when,  
from every sin set free, we are  
led by Jesu's hand into Canaan's  
Promised Land...

He gets no further. TURBO deals him a terrible backhander across the mouth. The PREACHER's eyes widen with shock and surprise. Blood wells from his lips.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT seems to be cracking up. He hugs the periscope shaft and watches the turmoil round him with madness in his eyes.

The din from the engine room ceases abruptly.

A blessed relief, but then...

Another sound. As though at the touch of a wand, everyone stiffens.

233. INT                      BOAT/ENGINE ROOM                      NIGHT

Dripping faces, eyes dilated with fear...

Suddenly heedless of the water spurting from the fractured pressure hull, they all raise their heads.

We hear a slow, shuffling sound...

234. INT                      BOAT /MOTOR ROOM                      NIGHT

Not a movement.

Moisture trickles down men's faces, incoming water gurgles in the bilge.

PILGRIM (whispering)

A destroyer!

The shuffling sound is quite distinct now - coming nearer...

235. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

The PREACHER's shoulders are jerking spasmodically. Tears run down his cheeks and mingle with the blood from his mouth.

The whole compartment freezes, terrified to the point of insanity.

The CAPTAIN stares upward with his mouth open.

CAPTAIN (mutters)

Turning a tight circle with her rudder hard over. That means they know where we are - they've got us pinpointed.

A universal groan of despair.

Slowly, the CAPTAIN's gaze detaches itself from the deckhead. He looks into the faces of his men.

CAPTAIN

Aha, so that's it...

General incomprehension. What does he mean?

The CAPTAIN looks up again.

CAPTAIN

Waiting for some evidence, are you?  
Wreckage and a little oil, maybe -  
or would a few chunks of flesh suit  
you better?

Everyone stares at him. He pushes his cap back and grins all round.

CAPTAIN

Lap a honor - they're doing a lap  
of honor - think they've finished  
us off - think we're sunk!

He stands up, thrusts his hands into his pockets and stares at the deckhead again.

CAPTAIN (acidly)

Not yet, you swine!

(to the rest)

Right, carry on. If it wasn't worth  
the effort before, it is now.

The CAPTAIN's explanation works wonders. The compartment comes to life. Crouching figures scurry around on tiptoe.

236. INT                      BOAT/ENGINE AND MOTOR ROOMS                      NIGHT

Feverish activity, faces glistening with oil and sweat, agitated whispers, leaks hissing and spurting everywhere.

Compressors are wedged with chocks, lengths of squared timber used for shoring up leaks.

In the midst of it all, the CHIEF ENGINEER hurries back and forth, issuing whispered instructions.



237. INT                      BOAT/BOW COMPARTMENT                      NIGHT

Water is jetting across the compartment, which has also sprung a number of leaks.

Turmoil in the semidarkness. A whole gang of men are panting and straining at a lever, trying to shift the defective foreplane.

HAGEN (in a low voice)

It's no use, that foreplane's  
had it...

238. INT                      BOAT/STERN TORPEDO COMPARTMENT                      NIGHT

The water is rising steadily.

Men are toiling away with a strength born of despair. The black tide has already reached their knees.

One member of the repair party is making prodigious efforts - driving himself to the limits of human endurance. We recognize him as JOHANN...

239. INT                      BOAT/WARDROOM                      NIGHT

The WAR CORRESPONDENT wanders through the boat, jostled by hurrying figures. He peers into the wardroom.

The deck plates are up and the inspection hatch of No. 1 Battery is open. RADEMACHER and PILGRIM are perched on the edge of the hole in the deck.

RADEMACHER gags and nearly vomits at the unendurable stench from below. PILGRIM raises a dipstick and moistens some litmus paper.

The CHIEF ENGINEER comes panting up.

CHIEF ENGINEER

Get some milk of lime in there  
fast. Then check the cells -  
find out how many have leaked.

240. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

The WAR CORRESPONDENT ducks into the control room, chest heaving. We sense that the air is deteriorating steadily. He makes his way past the CAPTAIN in a daze, only half bearing JOHANN's whispered report.

JOHANN

The flooding valve under No.5  
tube has sprung a leak ...  
Cooling-water pipes fractured...  
Same goes for the air induction  
pipes...

CAPTAIN

Are we losing oil, do you reckon?  
Which fuel tanks have bought it?

241. INT                      BOAT/P.O.s' MESS                      NIGHT

The WAR CORRESPONDENT totters through the P.O.s' Mess, past  
a row of bent backs. Several men are crouching over No.2  
Battery.

He hears someone vomiting. Someone else groans aloud.

VOICE

This God-awful stench!

242. INT                      BOAT/OUTSIDE GALLERY                      NIGHT

Ensign ULLMANN is huddled on the deck opposite the galley,  
staring straight ahead - a bundle of misery...

The WAR CORRESPONDENT flops down beside him.

A long pause, then!

ULLMANN (quietly)

Do we still have a change,  
Lieutenant?

The WAR CORRESPONDENT gives an apathetic shrug. He looks  
at the deck, not at ULLMANN.

ULLMANN rests his head against the bulkhead and shuts his  
eyes. All hope has vanished from his pale, boyish face...

243. INT                      BOAT/STERN TORPEDO COMPARTMENT                      NIGHT

Struggling, panting, gasping figures...

The water has risen even higher. JOHANN is now waist-deep.  
He heaves a new prop into position while two other men bring  
wedges. All three splash around in the murky pool, straining  
every muscle.

244. INT                      BOAT/WARDROOM                      NIGHT

The air is hazy.

Every available surface is covered with plans and blueprints.

The CHIEF ENGINEER spreads an electrical circuit diagram on top of the rest and starts muttering to himself. His shirt is soaked, his hair disheveled and hanging over his eyes, his left cheek badly scratched...

PILGRIM emerges from the bowels of the battery compartment, coughing and streaming tears. RADEMACHER's head appears too. He is retching violently.

PILGRIM

Twenty-four cells defective, sir.

The CHIEF ENGINEER swears, then hisses in the direction of the control room.

CHIEF ENGINEER

Breathing gear for these two,  
quick!

245. INT                      BOAT/STERN TORPEDO COMPARTMENT                      NIGHT

More and more leaks. Water forces its way through the hull under immense pressure, spurts across the compartment and drums against the inner skin.

The stern is crisscrossed with lengths of timber. Chocks are being hammered home. JOHANN strains and heaves, toiling like a man possessed.

246. INT                      BOAT/WARDROOM                      NIGHT

The WAR CORRESPONDENT climbs over the raised deck plates and squeezes in beside the SECOND LIEUTENANT, who is perched on a bunk. He sinks down, trembling. The CHIEF ENGINEER produces another diagram from a locker and spreads it out. Sweat drips off his nose and chin as he crosses off one battery cell after another.

CHIEF ENGINEER

Goddammit, nowhere near enough  
battery straps to go round.

He climbs down into the battery compartment.

SECOND LIEUTENANT (to WAR CORRESPONDENT)

He's got to bypass the damaged cells -  
it's our only hope. Without the batteries  
we're finished.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT puts his head back, breathing jerkily.  
The air is getting worse...

The CHIEF ENGINEER calls from below:

CHIEF ENGINEER (OFF)

Hey, why no light?

The WAR CORRESPONDENT's eyes roam around the wardroom and  
come to rest on a flashlight. He stuffs it into his waist-  
band and climbs laboriously down...

247. INT BOAT/STERN TORPEDO COMPARTMENT, MOTOR ROOM/NIGHT

JOHANN is chest-deep in water. Other men pass him tools while  
he feverishly works on the hull valves.

FRENSSEN sits huddled on the floorplates in the motor room,  
past moving. He is deathly pale - almost unconscious - and  
his quick, shallow breathing underlines the steady drop in  
the oxygen level...

248. INT BOAT/NO.1 BATTERY NIGHT

The battery compartment is a dark, cramped tunnel equipped  
with a travelling platform suspended on underslung rails.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT is lying on the platform, coughing and  
gagging as he grimly tries to hold his flashlight level.

Lying obliquely ahead of him, with a wrench between his teeth,  
is the CHIEF ENGINEER.

CHIEF ENGINEER (panting)

Round a bit - yes, that's fine.

He crawls a few feet further with the WAR CORRESPONDENT  
following, and toils away with pliers, wrenches and battery  
straps. His hands are trembling with nervous tension, and  
rivulets of sweat are coursing down his face.

CHIEF ENGINEER

These straps'll never go round -  
never!

249. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

The CAPTAIN is pacing up and down, deep in thought, one fist still nursing the small of his back.

The QUARTERMASTER is standing at the rear of the compartment. He gives the CAPTAIN a worried look, then stares down at his feet.

In the after part of the control room, the deck plates are already awash...

250. INT                      BOAT/WARDROOM, PASSAGE, CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

PILGRIM and RADEMACHER reach down and haul the WAR CORRESPONDENT and the CHIEF ENGINEER out.

The two men are utterly exhausted - gasping like stranded fish.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT staggers into the control room and sinks down on the deck.

The CHIEF ENGINEER pokes his head through the bulkhead.

CHIEF ENGINEER

We need some wire to bypass  
those cells - urgently!

At once, the message passes from mouth to mouth, like a password: Wire! - We need some wire!  
Get moving, find some wire!

251. INT                      BOAT/BOW COMPARTMENT                      NIGHT

The compartment looks like a battlefield. Knots of men are hard at work everywhere.

The BOSUN storms in.

BOSUN

Wire! The Chief needs some wire,  
quick!

SCHWALLE (baffled)

We don't have any wire in here.

DUFTE

What kind of wire?

BOSUN

Any kind, you dumbhead!

Shadowy figures flit around, rummaging, foraging, turning everything upside down.

252. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

The CAPTAIN is pacing tigerishly to and fro.

CAPTAIN (furiously)

Plenty of torpedoes on board at twenty-five thousand marks apiece, but no lousy wire. All we need is five marks worth of lousy old wire!

He comes to a halt behind the QUARTERMASTER.

CAPTAIN

Well?

QUARTERMASTER

The periscope head's cracked. The sky periscope's a goner too.

CAPTAIN

I see.

The BOSUN appears in the forward bulkhead doorway, beaming like a birthday boy.

BOSUN

Wire, Captain!

He is holding a few yards of thick, rusty old wire.

CAPTAIN

You see? That's something, anyway.

The CHIEF ENGINEER stares at the wire as though hypnotized, then literally snatches it from the BOSUN and disappears into the battery compartment.

JOHANN climbs through the after bulkhead and comes to attention in front of the CAPTAIN. He looks terrible - black with oil and soaking wet. We get the feeling that he may keel over at any moment.

JOHANN

Captain, sir - we've stopped the leaks.

This news electrifies the whole compartment. Every face turns in JOHANN's direction, open-mouthed and wide-eyed with disbelief.

The CAPTAIN stares at JOHANN. He clears his throat, visibly affected...

CAPTAIN

Good work, Johann. Very good work.

He lays his hand on JOHANN's shoulder and gives him a silent nod - JOHANN's great moment...

CAPTAIN

And now, climb out of those wet duds.

JOHANN disappears.

The CAPTAIN paces up and down, thinking hard.

CAPTAIN (like a man possessed)

We've got to unload that water. It's got to go, one way or another.

He halts abruptly and stares at the QUARTERMASTER.

CAPTAIN

Into the control-room bilge and then out, that's how!

253. INT BOAT/VARIOUS COMPARTMENTS NIGHT

The crew from a human chain running half the length of the boat.

Pails and buckets brimming with soupy black water are manhandled from the stern torpedo compartment, via the motor and engine rooms and the P.O.s' Mess, to the control room.

The expenditure of energy is immense, and the panting, grunting, men get soaked with the contents of their pails, which continually slop over...

254. INT BOAT/WARDROOM NIGHT

The CHIEF ENGINEER's head emerges from the battery compartment. He is green in the face and close to vomiting.

He hauls himself out and leans against the wardroom table, then stares in surprise at the CAPTAIN's face. The CAPTAIN's cheeks are bulging: he is munching a slice of bread and butter.

CAPTAIN (grins)

How does it look, Chief?

CHIEF ENGINEER (breathing hard)

So-so. We're almost through.

Only three cells to go.

He bends over his diagrams again.

The CAPTAIN eyes him anxiously. The deep-etched lines in the CHIEF ENGINEER's face are accentuated by the oil that has lodged in them. His hollow cheeks are twitching...

255. INT                      BOAT/VARIOUS COMPARTMENTS                      NIGHT

The members of the bailing party labor on, mouths gaping like black holes. The oxygen level is getting lower and lower...

The WAR CORRESPONDENT is in the P.O.s' Mess. He is soaked to the skin and reeling with exhaustion, but still he toils on.

The CHIEF ENGINEER squeezes past. He suddenly stops and stares along the human chain with an unseeing, faraway expression. Then he clambers aft into the engine room.

256. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

The CAPTAIN is sitting on the chart chest, staring down at the water, which has already risen ankle-deep above the deck plates.

The QUARTERMASTER ducks through the bulkhead and perches beside him.

QUARTERMASTER (dejectedly)

All the compasses have packed up, sir. So have the log and sounding gear, from the look of them, and the radio's a total write-off.

CAPTAIN

Some mess.



The QUARTERMASTER nods, props his head on his hands and stares at the grimy water.

Silence.

An oasis of calm in the midst of turmoil.

QUARTERMASTER (in an undertone)

Can we create enough buoyancy,  
Captain? Is there any hope at all?

Pause.

The CAPTAIN thrusts out his lower lip and sucks his cheeks in.

CAPTAIN

Good question.

Another silence.

CAPTAIN (broodingly)

There must be a bit of air left  
in the ballast tanks, after all  
that blowing. That could help.  
We'll just have to use up every  
ounce of h.p. air we've got...

( a lengthy pause for thought)

Maybe, Kriechbaum. Maybe...

The QUARTERMASTER nods to himself.

CAPTAIN

But we've got to shed some weight  
somehow. That water's got to go -  
it's got to!

257. INT BOAT/VARIOUS COMPARTMENTS NIGHT

A whispered order travels down the line!

S t o p   b a i l i n g !

The last pail of bilge water is manhandled from the stern,  
swung through the bulkhead and emptied.

Final deliverance... Heads sag onto chests and arms hang limp.  
Everyone struggles for breath, utterly exhausted.

The CHIEF ENGINEER squeezes past.

CHIEF ENGINEER (muttering to himself)

It might work... It might just work...

He splashes along to the control room, then disappears into  
the wardroom with the CAPTAIN and QUARTERMASTER following

258. INTBOAT/WARDROOMNIGHT

The CAPTAIN, CHIEF ENGINEER and QUARTERMASTER are bending over some blueprints.

CHIEF ENGINEER (breathing heavily)

It might work... Into the trimming tank by hand, then expel it with the auxiliary bilge pump and h.p. air.

CAPTAIN

I thought the auxiliary was out.

CHIEF ENGINEER

We'll fix it.

Pause.

The CAPTAIN and the QUARTERMASTER look at each other.

CAPTAIN

And then it's all or nothing. We blast away and hope she lifts.

CHIEF ENGINEER (nods)

We won't get a second chance.

Pause.

CAPTAIN

When?

CHIEF ENGINEER

When all our repairs are complete. Six to eight hours, I'd say.

CAPTAIN

Will the oxygen hold out?

CHIEF ENGINEER (wearily)

No, sir.

CAPTAIN (resolutely)

In that case, potash cartridges for everyone who's not working. All hands off watch, turn in.

QUARTERMASTER

Aye-aye, sir.

He quits the wardroom.

The CAPTAIN subsides onto a bunk.

Pause.

The CAPTAIN covertly watches the CHIEF ENGINEER, who is hunched over his diagrams, tracing circuits with a trembling forefinger. He raises his head, thinking hard and nervously chewing his lower lip.

259. INT                      BOAT/BOW COMPARTMENT                      NIGHT

All that disturbs the eerie silence is the sound of breathing - a strangely liquid, rattling chorus.

One feeble bulb provides the only lighting.

The compartment - bunks, hammocks and decking - is jam-packed with men. All are asleep.

The bulkhead door opens quietly and a pale face appears - JOHANN's. The beam of his flashlight roams across the sprawling, motionless figures.

All are wearing nose clips and have black tubes protruding from their mouths - the probosces of their breathing gear.

JOHANN climbs gingerly over the tangle of bodies, bends down and gropes in a crate. His hand emerges holding an orange.

Greedily, he sinks his teeth in the peel and sucks...

260. INT                      BOAT/P.O.s' MESS                      NIGHT

Dim lighting and the liquid rattle of men breathing through potash cartridges.

The CAPTAIN makes his way slowly past the bunks, checking on their occupants as he goes.

The men lie there stiffly, like corpses in a morgue, each with a blackish tube protruding from his mouth.

The CAPTAIN pauses beside FRENSSSEN, whose mouthpiece has fallen out, and gently shakes him by the shoulder.

FRENSSSEN gives a start and stares at the CAPTAIN as if he has seen a ghost.

The CAPTAIN grins broadly, stuffs the tube back into his mouth, and moves on.

261. INTBOAT/ENGINE ROOMNIGHT

A troglodytes' cave, harshly illuminated by inspection lamps.

All the walkways and floorplates have been removed. Between the engine seatings, which extend far below deck, a clutter of heavy machine parts.

Everything is thick with lubricating oil, nauseous black puddles of which lie everywhere.

Low voices and the muffled clank of tools.

The CAPTAIN crouches down for a better look at some men working below deck like contorted fakirs.

CAPTAIN (quietly)

Well?

Weary eyes look up at him. He winks encouragingly. Here and there, an oily face creases in a fleeting smile.

CAPTAIN

Going all right?

JOHANN (grinning)

It's got to.

Carefully, the CAPTAIN steps over some machine parts and bends down to speak to three men crouching beside the after seatings, cutting gaskets.

The CHIEF ENGINEER grunts as he twists his body into an even more awkward position.

CAPTAIN

How does it look from down there?

His voice has a warmth more usually reserved for inquiries about a man's wife and family.

262. INTBOAT/CONTROL ROOMNIGHT

Dead silence.

Light glints dully on the still, oily water covering the deck plates.

A dim clock face on the bulkhead registers 14.00...

No one to be seen except the CHIEF ENGINEER, who is slumped on the chart chest. He looks broken-backed, as if his spine can no longer support the weight of his head and shoulders.

A tube-adorned face appears in the bulkhead doorway.

WAR CORRESPONDENT (softly, removing his  
mouthpiece)

Chief, I still have some glucose  
tablets left.

The CHIEF ENGINEER looks up at him with no sign of recognition.  
Then he shakes his head.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT climbs through the bulkhead with a bottle  
of apple juice in his hand. He sits down beside the CHIEF  
ENGINEER and passes him the bottle.

The CHIEF ENGINEER drinks greedily, like a man dying of thirst,  
then puts the bottle down and stares into space.

At long last he starts to speak, quietly and hesitantly.

CHIEF ENGINEER

Crazy idea, sending us through the  
Strait... It was bound to go wrong...

Silence.

Both men stare down at the turbid soup covering the deck.

CHIEF ENGINEER

The Old Man knew - he knew the moment  
we were diverted to the Med. That's  
why he tried to put us ashore at Vigo.  
He knew we didn't have a hope of  
getting through...

He pauses, takes another swig and wipes the sweat off his fore-  
head.

CHIEF ENGINEER

He tried to fool us. No problem, he  
said. We'll trick them - dive and  
drift through, just like that.

(grins wearily)

Except that the trick didn't work.

A long pause.

WAR CORRESPONDENT (quietly)

Will we ever make it to the surface,  
Chief?

The CHIEF ENGINEER doesn't respond for an eternity.

CHIEF ENGINEER

I honestly don't know.

He hauls himself to his feet and plods unsteadily out of the  
compartment.

Silence in the control room.

The bilge water slops quietly to and fro.

263. INT

BOAT/WARDROOM

NIGHT

Very little light. No sound apart from the liquid rattle of breathing gear.

Closeup of the WAR CORRESPONDENT's sleeping face, haunted by nightmare visions. He wakes abruptly, coughs, removes his mouthpiece, and stares dazedly round. The SECOND LIEUTENANT is sound asleep in the opposite bunk.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT's eyes stray to the clock: 20.30...

The whole boat is ominously silent.

Then, with a sudden shock, he catches sight of the CAPTAIN huddled on a bunk in the gloom. We have never seen him look so totally dejected, so rapt in dark forebodings. The WAR CORRESPONDENT sits there turned to stone, sick with fear...

CAPTAIN (quietly)

I'm sorry.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT's eyes widen. His breathing becomes quick and shallow.

WAR CORRESPONDENT

Isn't there any hope?

The CAPTAIN wearily shakes his head.

CAPTAIN

The Chief's already had his eight hours. I don't think he's going to make it.

Silence. Nothing happens for several seconds. Then the WAR CORRESPONDENT's lower jaw starts to quiver. He compresses his lips and battles for self-control.

CAPTAIN

I'm sorry.

A pause. The two men sit there motionless. All we can hear is the rattle of the SECOND LIEUTENANT's breathing gear.

The CAPTAIN summons up a rueful grin.

CAPTAIN

"Face to face with destiny, in a man's world where courage is all, our heroes of the deep set forth to conquer or die..."

He shakes his head and stares at the table, dull-eyed.

CAPTAIN

What crap - what godforsaken crap!

The WAR CORRESPONDENT nods and sniffs, hard.

WAR CORRESPONDENT (quietly)  
I used to find it intoxicating,  
that sort of thing.

He wipes his moist eyes and gives an agonized smile.

WAR CORRESPONDENT

Now I know what it looks like.  
Destiny, I mean.

The SECOND LIEUTENANT grunts, sucking happily at his mouth-piece. Seconds tick by in silence.

Then footsteps come shuffling along the passage. The CHIEF ENGINEER materializes like an emaciated ghost, steadying himself against the bulkheads with arms oil-stained to the shoulder. Swaying, he comes to attention in front of the CAPTAIN.

CHIEF ENGINEER

Situation report, Captain.  
Main motors serviceable.  
Accumulated water pumped into  
trimming tanks. We may be able  
to blow it outboard with h.p.  
air. Compass and echo sounder  
now serviceable...

Pause. The CAPTAIN just sits there with his head sagging as though waiting for the ax to fall. Then he looks up at the CHIEF ENGINEER, slack-jawed. The CHIEF ENGINEER gives him a weary smile. The CAPTAIN stares back for an age, completely nonplussed.

CAPTAIN (falteringly)

Good, Chief - good, good.  
First take a breather.

The CHIEF ENGINEER performs a wobbly about-face and goes. The CAPTAIN is trembling from head to foot - even his jaw muscles are quivering. He draws a deep breath and clenches his fists till the knuckles go white. There is something appalling about this strong man's supreme effort to retain his composure...

CAPTAIN (hoarsely)

Good men, that's half the battle -  
good men!

He heaves himself erect and totters unsteadily into the control room.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT's eyes roam round the wardroom as if everything inside him is gyrating...

Low voices from the control room. The CAPTAIN seems to have mastered his attack of nerves.

CAPTAIN (OFF)

What's it like up top,  
Quatermaster.

QUARTERMASTER (OFF)

Dusk was two hours ago, sir.

CAPTAIN (OFF, loudly)

Right. We surface in twenty  
minutes.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT's teeth start chattering uncontrollably. He gives a deep, racking sob.

Then he jumps up and shakes the SECOND LIEUTENANT by the shoulder.

The SECOND LIEUTENANT gropes for his mouthpieces with both hands and clasps it like a bottle-fed baby, reluctant to wake.

WAR CORRESPONDENT (shaking him to and fro)

Wake up!

The SECOND LIEUTENANT blinks. The faraway look in his eyes recedes.

WAR CORRESPONDENT (whispering inches  
from his face)

We surface in twenty minutes!

Suspiciously, the SECOND LIEUTENANT removes his mouthpiece.

SECOND LIEUTENANT

Wha - Whassat ?

WAR CORRESPONDENT

We're going up!

The SECOND LIEUTENANT stares at him, then lies back and shuts his eyes again.

Very slowly a smile dawns on his face...



264. INT. BOAT/CONTROL ROOM NIGHT

Full house in the control room. The whole crew has congregated there, shoulder to shoulder. Expectant faces are clustered in the bulkhead doorways.

CAPTAIN (quietly)

Now hear this.

He is leaning against the chart table, feverishly watched by a gasping, panting audience. The air is becoming more and more unbreathable.

CAPTAIN

We're now going to blast away and see if we can get our asses out of here. If we succeed, things could get rough again.

(grins)

There's plenty of traffic up top.

He puts his head back and liberally scratches his beard.

So there's only one thing to do, and that's pray the engines start. Then it'll be full ahead both and away we go. Out of this hole and back to base.

Silence apart from the rasp of rapid breathing. Every face registers tension and anxiety.

CAPTAIN

So cross your fingers. If we make it, there'll be half a bottle of beer for all hands.

The Old Man is himself again...

CAPTAIN

We do have one point in our favor.

(grins broadly)

They won't be expecting us.

He surveys the sea of boyish, prematurely aged faces round him. Some of them manage to grin back.

CAPTAIN

Well, all clear?

ALL

Aye-aye, sir!

The CAPTAIN gives a satisfied nod and a prolonged sniff.

CAPTAIN (firmly)

Prepare to surface. On life jackets,  
stand by your escape gear.

A whisper runs the length of the boat! S t a n d b y  
y o u r e s c a p e g e a r !

The compartment springs to life. Men hurry to and fro carry-  
ing the brown bags containing their escape gear.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT fumbles nervously with his equipment  
and has to be helped by the SECOND LIEUTENANT.

Glances stray in the CAPTAIN's direction, taut with suspense.

CAPTAIN (calmly)

Blow!

The CONTROL-ROOM P.O. opens his valves. Compressed air hisses  
into the ballast tanks.

Not a movement. Everyone stands there transfixed.

265. EXT                      UNDER WATER                      NIGHT

A gentle hiss...

We can just discern the outlines of the boat. U 96 is lying  
at an angle in the rocks, motionless.

266. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

Sidelong glances at the depth gauge! the needle doesn't budge.

The hiss of compressed air goes on and on.

Still nothing.

The men surreptitiously flex their knees, trying to make them-  
selves lighter.

Fear creeps into their eyes...

267. EXT                      UNDER WATER                      NIGHT

U 96 emits a smattering of tiny bubbles but preserves her  
leaden immobility.

268. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

Faint groans of despair, intermittent sniffs...

Then, at long last, the compartment stirs.

269. EXT                      UNDER WATER                      NIGHT

A perceptible jerk, accompanied by strident squealing sounds.

More and more bubbles... U 96 is detaching herself from the sea-bed. Her hull scuffs a projecting rock.

270. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

Suppressed jubilation. The needle of the depth gauge quivers and starts to move counterclockwise. The compartment gives a lurch...

271. EXT                      UNDER WATER                      NIGHT

An awesome sight: the battered hulk is gliding, drifting toward the surface, enveloped in a myriad bubbles...

272. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

The CHIEF ENGINEER stares at the needle, his whole face working.

CHIEF ENGINEER (hoarsely)

Two hundred meters and rising.

CAPTAIN (clears his throat)

Kill those lights.

The lights are switched off. The compartment is now dimly lit by the glow from the bulkheads.

200 meters... 190 meters...

Shadowy figures throng the semidarkness, lips parted, hearts, pounding wildly...

CHIEF ENGINEER (whispers)

One-fifty...

Seconds crawl by. Not a sound.

Ponderously, the CAPTAIN climbs into the conning tower.

273. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      NIGHT

The night is dark and almost windless, the swell long and smooth.

Little bubbles come frothing up from the depths with a sibilant hiss. The boat is on its way.

Panting and blowing, a dark shape breaks surface - the conning tower. Then, with a liquid roar, comes the hull itself. Torrents of water gush through the gratings.

A dark leviathan rolls gently in the long swell: U 96 has returned from the dead...

274. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

The upper hatch springs open with a loud report. An almost solid wall of air rushes into the hull. Greedily, the oxygen-starved men fill their lungs to the brim...

CAPTAIN (OFF)

Blow to full buoyancy.  
Stand by main vents.  
Stand by port main engine.

The order is quickly passed in a whisper:

S t a n d   b y   p o r t   m a i n   e n g i n e !

275. INT                      BOAT/ENGINE ROOM                      NIGHT

Pallid figures are poised and waiting.

A low voice hisses:

VOICE

Stand by port main engine!

JOHANN and his men open the exhaust flaps, starting-air bottles and test cocks.

They stare spellbound, at the battered diesel...

JOHANN (an imploring undertone)

Start, please start!

CAPTAIN (OFF, through public address system)

Half ahead port.

A vigorous tug at the lever. The supercharger snarls, the sleeping monster vibrates and comes to life with a roar that shakes the entire compartment.

276. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

Subdued cries of jubilation. The port engine is pounding away.

CAPTAIN (OFF)

Quartermaster on the bridge!

The QUARTERMASTER darts up the ladder.

277. INT                      BOAT/ENGINE ROOM                      NIGHT

An infernal din. The engine rattles, clatters, spits and snarls, but it is running.

Pale, transfigured faces surround it. ARIQ grins broadly, JOHANN's eyes glow with pride...

278. EXT                      BOAT/BRIDGE                      NIGHT

Tension on the bridge is at fever pitch. The CAPTAIN and QUARTERMASTER are peering through their glasses.

Eventually:

CAPTAIN

Right, let's go.

(briskly, down the conning tower)

Full ahead both, maximum power!

279. INT                      BOAT/ENGINE ROOM                      NIGHT

JOHANN operates some more levers and both engines raise their voices in unison, shaking the whole compartment.

The diesels rattle, clatter and roar as if about to blow up at any moment.



283. INT                      BOAT/ENGINE ROOM                      NIGHT

The atmosphere is still charged with tension.

Closeup of JOHANN's face. He is standing in the midst of the pandemonium, staring at his pounding engines.

He clenches his fists and grimaces.

JOHANN

Keep going, damn you!

284. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      NIGHT

The bow-wave foams, the wake boils and bubbles.

U 96 hurtles along under maximum power. Waves hit the conning tower with a series of muffled crashes.

285. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

Unbearable suspense down below...

The WAR CORRESPONDENT subsides onto the chart chest and claps his hands over his ears, deafened by the insane din.

The CHIEF ENGINEER props his head on his hands. His jaw muscles are twitching with overstrain.

286. EXT                      BOAT/BRIDGE                      NIGHT

Heedless of the spray lashing his face and streaming down it, the CAPTAIN stares straight ahead.

CAPTAIN (euphoric)

They won't catch us this time,  
Kriechbaum - not this time!

He sights something and raises his glasses. Through them, we make out the dim shape of a corvette.

CAPTAIN (calling below)

Hard-a-port!

The HELMSMAN's excited voice acknowledges.

CAPTAIN (yells)

Now we'll show 'em!

287. INT                      BOAT/BOW COMPARTMENT                      NIGHT

Twenty faces quiver and vibrate in sympathy with the tortured hull. Everyone has found a handhold and is hanging on tight, teeth gritted...

288. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      NIGHT

U 96 speeds on, hurling herself at the waves, roaring through the swell, clawing her way along by main force...

289. INT                      BOAT/ENGINE ROOM                      NIGHT

Shock effect: oil has started to spurt from one of the blaring engines. JOHANN and ARIO dart across, panting and cursing, and try to stem the flow. The black jet sprays their faces...

290. EXT                      BOAT/BRIDGE                      NIGHT

Water cascades into the bridge well.

CAPTAIN (calling below)

Starboard thirty-steer one-five-zero!

Then, abruptly:

CAPTAIN

Belay starboard - hard-a-port!

291. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      NIGHT

ULLMANN's face appears in the bulkhead, very pale. The PREACHER has shut his eyes and is muttering to himself. Overcome with suspense, the SECOND LIEUTENANT paces up and down, continually shaking his head.

SECOND LIEUTENANT

Typical of the Old Man to go for broke. Still, it's worth it.

(a wry grin at the WAR CORRESPONDENT)

Half a bottle of beer all round!



292. EXTBOAT/BRIDGENIGHT

The CAPTAIN's strange euphoria is mounting steadily. He shouts to make himself heard above the head wind.

CAPTAIN

They haven't spotted us - must be all tucked up in their bunks... No, know what, Kriechbaum? They're back in the mess, celebrating!

He guffaws insanely.

CAPTAIN (yelling)

Not yet, my friends!  
N o t y e t !

His raucous laughter rings out in the darkness...

293. EXTSEA/BOATNIGHT

U 96 speeds past the CAMERA, heading north beneath a moonless sky.

The roar of engines fades, the boat's outlines dwindle as it recedes.

The wake shimmers white in the gloom. It steadily widens, loses its luster and disperses, effacing all signs of the U-boat's presence.

We can barely see it now - barely hear the distant drone of its engines.

Then silence falls.

Slow fade.

294. EXTSEA/BOATDAY

Fade in.

Dawn is just breaking, night yielding to day.

In the east, an orgy of color. Cloudbanks are shimmering, glowing, catching fire. The motionless sea resembles an expanse of watered taffeta with an orange ball of flame hovering above it.

Utter stillness.

Nothing to be seen - no ship, no masthead, just the boundless sea.

Little by little, the silence is invaded by a strange, raucous, semimusical chorus of voices.

Then comes an unreal and fantastic sight. A battered, weather-beaten sea monster limps into CAMERA: the boat!

U 96 is chugging slowly, painfully along. We get our first clear view of the damage she has sustained. The gratings are grotesquely twisted, and a big dark hole yawns in front of the bridge. All that remains of the gun is its pivot.

The singing from the boat's interior grows steadily louder. The whole crew are singing "Tipperary" ...

295. INT                      BOAT/BOW COMPARTMENT                      DAY

Euphoria reigns in the bow compartment.

"Tipperary" is blaring from the loudspeaker, reinforced by BOCKSTIEGEL and his accordion. Twenty voices are bawling the words, and everyone in sight is brandishing a beer bottle.

The men have paired off for an impromptu dance: WILLIBERT with HAGEN, DUFTE with SCHWALLE, ARIO with the PREACHER. The PREACHER's teeth are bared in a blissful smile. Two of them are missing...

ARIO

Schwalle, 'old son, maybe you'll  
get to dip your pecker again  
after all.

SCHWALLE (beaming lasciviously)

Watch out, girls, here I come!

BOCKSTIEGEL

And Dufte can screw that second-hand mattress of his.

Insane cackles. Even DUFTE grins.

SCHWALLE

Hey, Willi, how about you?

WILLIBERT rolls his eyes in exstasy.

WILLIBERT

Me? I'm for a nice, long,  
leisurely -

They all join in:

ALL

- afternoon fuck!

The whole compartment groans aloud with sensual delight.

296. INT                      BOAT/CONTROL ROOM                      DAY

Spirits are just as high in the crowded control room. Everyone is handing round bottles of beer and singing "Tipperary".

The CAPTAIN, enthroned on the chart table with his cap on the back of his head, is singing louder than anyone. Mischievously, he winks at the FIRST LIEUTENANT, who smiles back and joins in with a will.

The SECOND LIEUTENANT is standing on a crate, conducting with his bottle of beer.

TURBO is hanging up some hand-painted victory pennants.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT looks round the compartment until he spots Ensign ULLMANN. ULLMANN beams at him, beside himself with joy.

The only person not singing is the CHIEF ENGINEER. He is seated on the flooding panel, ashen-faced with fatigue. He stares at the CAPTAIN, glassy-eyed. At last a smile flits over his face. It is an age since he saw the Old Man so carefree und relaxed ...

297. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

A glorious sunny day. The limpid, pale green sea is surmounted by a sky flecked with snow-white clouds.

U 96 plows on with her bow-wave creaming...

298. EXT                      BOAT/BRIDGE                      DAY

Third Watch on the bridge.

The QUARTERMASTER leans over the bridge casing, staring ahead with a rapt expression.

Slowly, he opens his mouth and holds his breath.

He raises his glasses and takes a protracted look, then dashes to the upper hatch and calls below:

QUARTERMASTER

L a R o c h e l l e !

299. EXT                      SEA/BOAT                      DAY

Long shot of U 96 in an infinity of sea.

The bridge has come alive with movement. One man after another hurries up top and squeezes into the cramped little bridge well or the "conservatory" aft...

Slowly, the CAMERA pulls back.

The galley hatch clangs open, then the torpedo-loading hatch. Figures scramble on deck and hurry across the gratings to the forecasing.

Near chaos. Almost all hands are on deck, and all are staring at something in the distance.

U 96 steadily dwindles in size as the CAMERA continues to pull back, then pans to show us the focus of the crew's emotions.

Shapes begin to etch themselves into the distant haze. We recognize the miniature buildings and toy cranes of La Rochelle...

300. EXT                      BOAT/FORECASING, BRIDGE                      DAY

A breathless hush.

Incredulously, as though confronted by a mirage, the men feast their eyes on the base they never expected to see again.

They are a pathetic sight in broad daylight: chalk-white complexions disfigured by red boils and sores, hollow cheeks, sunken eyes - horrific faces imprinted with every conceivable form of human anguish.

All find it hard to grasp the fact of their survival. Some blow their noses, others compress their trembling lips. Ensign ULLMANN's eyes fill with tears. He strives hard to quell the sob that rises in his throat.

A montage of moving images...

301. EXT                      LA PALlice (HARBOR OF LA ROCHELLE)                      DAY

A brass band is blaring.

The quayside is crowded with cheering figures - smartly uniformed officers, elegant fur-coated women, Red Cross nurses, dockyard workers.

U 96 glides slowly toward the quay.

Snappy salutes, girls waving and throwing bouquets...

302. EXT                      BOAT/BRIDGE                      DAY

The CAPTAIN is casually saluting the quay. The WAR CORRESPONDENT stands beside him, watching the hurly-burly with a bemused expression.

Pipes shrill, heaving-lines snake through the air, sailors secure the ends to bollards.

Then the WAR CORRESPONDENT stiffens. In the midst of the turmoil on deck, Ensign ULLMANN is staring spellbound at a familiar bombed-out building in the distance...

The WAR CORRESPONDENT raises his glasses. Through them, we see a girl in a headscraft standing at one of the shattering windows, waving and waving...

CAPTAIN

Stop engines. All hands muster aft.

The crew form up. They stand there, erect and boyish, grinning or waving nonchalantly at the quay.

A gangway is run out.

Then something strange happens:

The shouts and laughter cease abruptly, the band wails to a stop, the murmur of the crowd dies away...

For one long silent moment, everyone rigidifies into a living tableau, heads tilted, ears cocked.

A faint hum is coming from the direction of the sea...

Horror dawns on a hundred faces - horror and petrification.

The hum becomes a deep, unbroken drone of engines.

At that moment, something streaks overhead with a frightful roar that punctures the silence like a bullet: a fighter.

Cannon shells rip into the cobbled quayside, sending up showers of splintered stone. Everyone scatters.

CAPTAIN (at the top of his voice)

Come on, out of here! All hands  
into the bunker!

A pom-pom starts pumping away.

Wailing sirens, cries of despair, panic-stricken figures racing in all directions.

The drone of engines becomes earth-shaking in intensity: a whole armada of bombers is nearing the harbor.

Moments later, a carpet of bombs comes crashing down. Fountains of rubble and asphalt erupt, columns of water shoot into the air.

People are running for their lives, diving for cover...

The WAR CORRESPONDENT staggers along the quay toward the gigantic U-boat bunker, hemmed in by clouds of smoke, explosive mushrooms of dirt, fountains of water.

An invisible fist bludgeons him to the ground and leaves him lying there, dazed...

Machineguns rattle, the antiaircraft guns on the bunker roof bark hurriedly against a background of monstrous explosions.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT scrambles to his feet and reels toward the bunker again.

A grotesque ballet: figures throw themselves flat, zigzag like hares, leap in the air, jackknife and collapse...

And still the bombs rain down. Fragments of stone whine through the air, adding to the general cacophony.

The scene is now veiled in dust and smoke.

Arms flailing, the WAR CORRESPONDENT reaches the concrete wall, squeezes through the bunker door and sinks to the ground.

Groans fill the bunker's dust-laden interior.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT runs a hand over his forehead. It comes away sticky with blood... His eyes roam the gloom, picking out face after face: the CHIEF ENGINEER, the FIRST LIEUTENANT, HAGEN, DUFTE, BOCKSTIEGEL, the BOSUN- all safe. FRENSSEN is writhing and clutching his stomach...

Still no respite. A tremendous explosion rends the air. The whole bunker resonates like a gigantic drum.

Huge chunks of concrete hurtle down from above, followed by dense clouds of dust: a direct hit on the bunker roof.

Knots of panic-stricken figures mill around. The air inside has become unbreathable...

The WAR CORRESPONDENT fights his way to the huge armored door and thrusts his head out into the inferno, gasping for breath.

The whole harbor basin is ablaze - shrouded in oily black smoke.

Another bomb comes crashing down on the bunker roof, sending massive pieces of masonry spinning through the air.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT staggers on through a scene of apocalyptic horror - blazing water, billowing flames, incandescent buildings, yawning craters - and all of it swathed in a pall of dust and smoke.

Explosions are interspersed with screams of agony, the whipcrack of machinegun fire, the pounding of light antiaircraft guns...

Amid the smoke, twisted corpses with familiar faces:

HINRICH, terribly disfigured... The PREACHER, stiff and daubed with blood... ARIQ, a gory, ferocious mask... The SECOND LIEUTENANT, his baby-face still grimacing with pain...

The WAR CORRESPONDENT seems to have lost his reason. He wanders aimlessly on through the inferno, past other dead bodies:

JOHANN, a phantom staring at him with lifeless eyes... WILLIBERT, a contorted, bullet-riddled doll. The QUARTERMASTER, now faceless...

A lone figure sprints through the smoke, heading for the bombed-out building - Ensign ULLMANN. He is yelling like a madman.

ULLMANN

F r a n ç o i s e !

FRANCOISE runs toward him, stumbling over the rubble. Her headscarf comes off: her head is bald - her hair shorn... She hurls herself into ULLMANN's arms and they cling to each other like frightened children.

The WAR CORRESPONDENT staggers back along the quay. There, through the haze, he sees the CAPTAIN.

The CAPTAIN is kneeling on the cobblestones, his sweater blown to shreds, staring wide-eyed at the water.

Only the boat's conning tower still juts from the surface, surrounded by blazing oil, streaks of blood, shattered timbers, bobbing corpses...

With a bubbling groan, the bridge disappears into the oily depths.

U 96 has finally sunk.

The CAPTAIN gives a roar of anguish. Blood spurts from his mouth. Then he pitches forward on the cobblestones.