

THE CROWN

by

Peter Morgan

Episode I

"Hyde Park Corner"

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7th Floor, The Place
175 High Holborn
WC1V 7AA

FADE IN:

1 INT. THRONE ROOM - BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DUSK

1

A series of faces. Stern. Tense. Formidable. The faces of the British Establishment.

CAPTION: "19th NOVEMBER, 1947"

King George VI, the Lord Chamberlain, the Master of the Household, the Secretary of the Central Chancery, The King's Private Secretary (Lascelles), the Lord Chancellor, (keeper of the Privy Seal), the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, two members of the privy Council, and the Home Secretary.

All are assembled in a rich, baroque room at Buckingham Palace, necks craned, watching intently as..

A fountain pen scratches across parchment. The 26-year-old PHILIP MOUNTBATTEN signs his name..

LORD CHAMBERLAIN

Here, Sir.

Once.

LORD CHAMBERLAIN

And here.

Twice.

LORD CHAMBERLAIN

Thank you, Sir.

Three times. Intricate legal documents. Then PHILIP kneels in anticipation as his father-in-law-to-be anoints him..

KING GEORGE

Philip Mountbatten, Baron Greenwich,
Earl of Merioneth, Duke of Edinburgh..

The KING puts a wide blue sash over PHILIP's shoulder, then pins a medal to his chest, a gleaming Garter Star.

KING GEORGE

...Knight of the Garter.

PHILIP rises. Shakes the KING's hand.

PHILIP

Thank you, Sir.

Silence in the room. One or two eyes look away. Throats cleared. People check their watches. There is no one present for whom this is a particularly happy moment.

2 INT. CENTRE ROOM - BUCKINGHAM PALACE - SAME TIME 2

But there is one person who is happy about this.

PRINCESS ELIZABETH, the 21-year-old heir to the throne, who waits in a neighbouring room..

She stares out of a window. A window etched with raindrops.

Looking out into the Mall. The real world. A world she barely knows. The Royal Standard fluttering in the wind.

Presently, from next door, the sound of doors opening. The dark rumble of male voices and laughter.

ELIZABETH goes to the door. Walks out into the corridor.

3 INT. CORRIDOR - PALACE - DAY 3

She sees all the white-haired men emerging from the investiture in conversation.

Walking off together. Familiar to one another. Friends. Members of the same club. Finally PHILIP emerges.

Handsome and immaculate. Naval uniform. Garter sash. Medals. But something unmistakably dangerous about him, too.

Not part of the 'club'.

ELIZABETH stares at him. Still the swooning fourteen year old girl with a rebellious crush she was the day she met him.

ELIZABETH

How was it? "Your Royal Highness?"

He lights a cigarette.

PHILIP

They got through it. I got through it.

He looks at her. The blunt humour. The hint of danger.

PHILIP

Think they'd all have preferred a nice, pink-faced Marquis with a grouse moor in the Scottish Borders.

(feigns seriousness)

Are you sure you wouldn't have preferred one of those?

ELIZABETH watches PHILIP inhale deeply.

ELIZABETH

Must you smoke? You know how I hate it.

PHILIP

Pity. Because I love it so very much.
And like a great many other things,
I'm going to give it all up...for you.

He takes a last puff. Savours it. Eyes closed. Then breaks into a smile, and stubs it out.

ELIZABETH

You've still got twenty-four hours to
change your mind.

PHILIP

No. You'll be marrying a non-smoker.

ELIZABETH

I meant about everything.

PHILIP

What? You think I can still change my
mind, now?

He indicates his Garter sash. His medal. His 'rewards'.

PHILIP

I've signed myself away.

ELIZABETH

Or won the biggest prize on earth.

PHILIP

That's certainly what they think.

He looks at her. His face softens.

PHILIP

It's what I think, too.

He kisses her on the forehead.

PHILIP

See you tomorrow. Try to get some
sleep.

ELIZABETH

You, too.

PHILIP

A naval officer's stag night? Chance'd
be a fine thing.

He goes.

4

EXT. DORCHESTER HOTEL - NIGHT

4

Cars arriving outside the central London hotel.

PHILIP's stag party. A group of his fellow naval officers and friends. Everyone in starched white Naval evening dress.

Impossibly elegant.

The EARL OF MOUNTBATTEN (briefly back from India) is the senior guest along with various captains and 1st lieutenants from 27th Destroyer Flotilla.

At that moment a pack of press PHOTOGRAPHERS are invited in to take photographs.

MOUNTBATTEN

Who let them in?

A ripple of groans as the Naval officers reluctantly agree to let the photographers take some photos.

MOUNTBATTEN

(barks authoritatively)

Sixty seconds, that's all you've got.

MOUNTBATTEN turns to PHILIP as they pose for the shots.

MOUNTBATTEN

So, what's it to be? After the honeymoon?

PHILIP

I'm aiming for Malta.

MOUNTBATTEN

Very wise. A nice naval officer's posting overseas. Away from court. The two of you'll be able to totally disappear into the background, and live like normal people.

(calling out)

Thirty seconds!

The PHOTOGRAPHERS continue to take pictures. MOUNTBATTEN stays close to PHILIP...

MOUNTBATTEN

Speaking of normal people, I spoke to the Lord Chancellor, who confirmed what I always suspected; that the Proclamation Act of 1917 which changed the family name from Saxe-Coburg-Gotha to Windsor made one significant omission.

PHILIP

Namely?

MOUNTBATTEN

It failed to include George V's FEMALE descendants.

(barks to PHOTOGRAPHERS)

That's enough now.

But the PHOTOGRAPHERS continue without heeding MOUNTBATTEN.

MOUNTBATTEN

It means those females, of whom the woman you're marrying is one, are free to behave like every other NORMAL woman in the country, and take their names from...

PHILIP

From?

MOUNTBATTEN

Their husbands. Which would mean a royal house, in your name, dear boy. 'Mountbatten'.

PHILIP

But it's not my real name, Uncle. It's my adoptive name.

MOUNTBATTEN

True.

PHILIP

A name I took to make me acceptable to the British establishment. To stop me appearing to be the rootless foreigner they all think I am. And since the name I took is YOURS, it would be a royal house not in MY name, so much as YOURS.

MOUNTBATTEN shrugs, feigning innocence.

MOUNTBATTEN

If you insist.

6

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - ELIZABETH'S ROOM - NIGHT

6

ELIZABETH is in her room. Reading a book. A scratch at the door, then it opens.

MARGARET, her younger sister enters.

MARGARET

Can't sleep. You?

ELIZABETH

No.

MARGARET

So much noise outside. Have you had a look?

ELIZABETH

I looked earlier. When I went to bed.

MARGARET

How many were there then?

ELIZABETH

Eighty? A hundred?

MARGARET

Have another look now.

ELIZABETH gets out of bed, walks over to the window.

Outside: a sea of several thousand people waiting in the MALL.

MARGARET

Have they nothing better to do?

MARGARET looks at ELIZABETH.

MARGARET

Nervous?

ELIZABETH

A little.

MARGARET

Not a lot? Not absolutely terrified and falling apart inside?

ELIZABETH

What'd be the point of that? That'd be no use to anyone.

MARGARET

Typical Lilibet. Coping heroically. As always. No fuss.

MARGARET yawns.

MARGARET

I'd better try to get some sleep, I want to look irresistible tomorrow.

ELIZABETH

Who for?

MARGARET

Someone.

ELIZABETH

Who?

MARGARET
Someone unsuitable.

ELIZABETH
How unsuitable?

MARGARET
VERY unsuitable.

ELIZABETH
Who?

MARGARET smiles enigmatically, heads for the door..

ELIZABETH
Margaret? You can't just go..

But MARGARET does.

ELIZABETH is left by the window. She looks out one more time...hiding from view...

Then draws the curtains shut.

7 EXT. 28 HYDE PARK GATE - CHURCHILL RESIDENCE - DAY 7

To establish: a private address. Number 28, Hyde Park Gate. A brick house in a cul-de-sac, off Kensington Road. In close proximity to the House of Commons. The Churchill residence.

8 INT. 28 HYDE PARK GATE - CHURCHILL RESIDENCE - DAY 8

73-year-old WINSTON CHURCHILL wheezes, puffs, short of breath, as he finishes getting dressed in morning coat. An almighty exertion. Clearly not a well man.

A knock at the door. His wife, CLEMMIE (62), pops her head around the door...

CLEMMIE
C'mon. We're late.

WINSTON looks up with difficulty.

WINSTON
Almost there.

CLEMMIE
Very late.

CLEMMIE goes. CHURCHILL straightens, a cunning glint in his eye. We realize his slowness is intentional.

"Snap", a moment later the door opens again...

CLEMMIE
Unbecomingly late.

CLEMMIE goes. CHURCHILL slows down again. Taking his time. "Snap", the door opens. CLEMMIE reappears, and barks.

CLEMMIE
Unpardonably late!

9 INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - DAY

9

Theatre of pomp and circumstance; the pre-eminent religious cathedral in the United Kingdom. Since 1066, the traditional place of coronation and burial for British monarchs.

Today the Abbey is full. Two thousand five hundred guests. Entire Royal dynasties, Heads of State. The men spectacular in morning dress or uniforms and the ladies wear floor-length dresses, elbow-length white gloves, jewels and tiaras or hats, many with feathered plumes.

Heads turn as the QUEEN and QUEEN MARY arrive. Both Queens sporting Garter badges and sashes. The organist plays.

10 EXT. STREETS - DAY

10

The Irish State Coach (blue and black, with gilt decoration, and red-spoked wheels) carrying PRINCESS ELIZABETH and her father. They talk between waves to streets lined with people.

ELIZABETH
 I've asked Mummy already, but maybe I should ask you. From a man's perspective.

KING GEORGE
 What?

ELIZABETH
 What it takes?

KING GEORGE
 What it takes to what?

He looks at his daughter.

KING GEORGE
 Oh..
 (thinks)
 Do not look for perfection in him. Or yourself. Be patient, flexible and understanding.

ELIZABETH
 Right.

KING GEORGE
Learn to forgive and forget.

ELIZABETH
I'll try.

KING GEORGE
Stand together facing the world.
And never forget to say "sorry" and
"thank you". Twenty times a day.

ELIZABETH
That often?

KING GEORGE
At least! And remember always that
independence is equal, dependence is
mutual, and obligation is reciprocal.

The coach is stopped. Uniformed POLICEMEN confer with the driver.

The KING is dressed in the uniform of the Admiral of the Fleet. He looks up, irritated.

KING GEORGE
What's going on?

The FOOTMAN steps down. Embarrassed.

FOOTMAN
Still waiting on one guest, Sir.

KING GEORGE
What??

FOOTMAN
I'm told his car's pulling in now. So
we'll be on our way shortly.

The FOOTMAN goes. The KING shakes his head, tutting to himself.

KING GEORGE
He's got nerve. You have to give him
that.

ELIZABETH
You know who it is?

ELIZABETH wears a pearl and crystal encrusted ivory silk dress, with a 15ft train. Tiara and necklace.

KING GEORGE
My dear, there's only ONE MAN ON EARTH
that'd have the temerity to keep the
King of England waiting on the day of
his daughter's wedding.

11 EXT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - DAY 11

Car doors open, and WINSTON CHURCHILL gets out, with his wife, CLEMMIE. It's the arrival of a movie star.

12 INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - DAY 12

CHURCHILL enters the Abbey with CLEMMIE. The last guest. It's a dramatic, theatrical entrance.

As he enters, heads turn, and then something happens that will be talked about for generations to come.

One by one, the assembled Crown Heads of Europe - the loftiest guest list in the world - gets to its feet.

The King and Queen of Denmark, the King of Norway, Prince Regent and Prince Bernhardt of the Netherlands, King Michael and the Queen Mother of Romania, Queen Frederika of Greece, the Crown Prince and Princess of Sweden, the King of Iraq, the Prince Regent of Belgium, the Prince and Princess of Luxembourg, the Count of Barcelona and his mother Queen Ena of Spain...

All rise out of respect.

Also in the congregation, the dashing ANTHONY EDEN looks at his friends, and gets, reluctantly, to his feet.

EDEN

Oh for God's sake.

SALISBURY

The man really has no shame.

A gang of Conservative plotters watch hatefully as CHURCHILL milks the moment - 'BOBBETY' SALISBURY, along with HARRY CROOKSHANK, JAMES STUART, ANTHONY EDEN, and OTHERS.

SALISBURY

You realise this is for our benefit.

EDEN

Oh, I know. And also a little bit for our Prime Minister.

CLEMENT ATTLEE, the Prime Minister, rolls his eyes and deliberately - pointedly - remains seated.

He is dressed in a simple lounge suit, surrounded by several ancient, wheezing, socialists; battle-weary, dilapidated members of the Labour Cabinet, also in lounge suits, (STAFFORD CRIPPS, ERNEST BEVIN).

A striking contrast to the majority of morning-suited/uniformed men in the congregation.

CHURCHILL finally reaches his seat.

A fanfare of trumpets. The 21-year-old Elizabeth enters, accompanied by the King. The procession walks down the aisle led by choir boys of the Chapel Royal, followed by the various deans, bishops and archbishops.

13

INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - LATER

13

ELIZABETH and PHILIP kneel before the altar on boxes draped in rose-coloured silk.

The ARCHBISHOP turns to ELIZABETH.

ARCHBISHOP

Elizabeth, wilt thou have this Man to be thy wedded Husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony? Wilt thou obey him, and serve him, love, honour, and keep him in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?

ELIZABETH

I will.

14

INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - SAME TIME

14

CHURCHILL scowls disapprovingly from his place in the congregation, then whispers loudly to CLEMMIE.

WINSTON

It's a mistake I tell you.

CLEMMIE

Sssshh!!

WINSTON

Who is this immigrant foundling we're ushering into our palaces?

Heads turn in the row in front of him.

WINSTON

Just three weeks ago he renounced his religion. Greek Orthodox! His sisters have not been invited. Why? Because each is married to Nazis.

(indicates)

Just look at his relatives!

CHURCHILL nods in the direction of a group of European royal guests seated on the other side.

WINSTON

A motley collection of fugitive royal beggars who've crawled out of their hiding places and garrets. Our princess was born in a palace, into the most evolved monarchy in Western Europe. He was born on a kitchen table in Corfu.

CHURCHILL indicates the tall, imposing figure of MOUNTBATTEN, done out in top naval rig, with his wife LADY MOUNTBATTEN, sporting two enormous, too flamboyant feathered plumes on her head...

WINSTON

This whole thing is Mountbatten's triumph. He engineered it all.
(with evident disdain)
The man who gave India away.

15 INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - LATER

15

Meanwhile, back at the altar..

ELIZABETH

I Elizabeth Alexandra Mary take thee Philip, to be my wedded Husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish, and to obey, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I give thee my troth.

PHILIP puts the ring on ELIZABETH's finger.

PHILIP

With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly Goods I thee endow: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

The ARCHBISHOP extends his hands..

ARCHBISHOP

Let us pray. O ETERNAL God, Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Giver of all spiritual grace...

16 INT. ST. EDWARD'S CHAPEL - DAY

16

The bride and groom sign the register in a small chapel off the main Abbey.

As do the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Dean of Westminster, the KING and QUEEN, Philip's MOTHER and the ancient QUEEN MARY. As they sign we hear...

ARCHBISHOP (V.O.)

...the Author of everlasting life;
Send thy blessing upon these thy
servants, this Man and this Woman,
whom we bless in thy Name; that they
may ever remain in perfect love and
peace together, and live according to
thy laws; through Jesus Christ our
Lord. Amen.

(a beat)

Those whom God hath joined together
let no man put asunder.

17 INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - DAY

17

Mendelsohn's "Wedding March" plays as everyone exits the Abbey through the West Door.

KING GEORGE finds himself next to CHURCHILL. A warm greeting between the two men.

KING GEORGE

Would it be very unconstitutional of
me to say how much I miss our weekly
chats?

KING GEORGE indicates the Labour Prime Minister, CLEMENT ATTLEE, a few steps behind them.

KING GEORGE

You successor is..
(tails off)
Well, it would be indiscrete of me to
say.

WINSTON

Then allow me to say it for you. "Last
week an empty taxi pulled up outside
the House of Commons, and Mr. Attlee
got out."

KING GEORGE laughs. The two evidently firm friends.

KING GEORGE

I shall never understand how he and
his party won the election, after
you'd won us the war.

WINSTON

Nor I, Sir. And now look at the mess
they've got us in.

They walk past the same group of senior Conservative plotters, led by the dashing EDEN - fed up with CHURCHILL still being leader of their Party.

EDEN scowls as he sees CHURCHILL.

EDEN

If it weren't hurting the party so much, you'd have to admire his tenacity.

SALISBURY

He should have stepped down as Leader when he lost us the election last time. Even his wife pleaded with him not to carry on, thought his loss a blessing in disguise. The old fool should step down now.

EDEN

Can you see him doing it?

SALISBURY

No. He'll cling on forever. Unless of course...

EDEN

Of course..?

SALISBURY

He's pushed.
(a meaningful look)
By the person the party and the country wants to see replace him.

EDEN's face: knowing what SALISBURY says is true.

18

INT. ST JAMES' PALACE - DAY

18

ELIZABETH and PHILIP are shown into a large baroque room.

ELIZABETH

Goodness.

PHILIP

(under his breath)
Christ.

REVERSE ANGLE: now we see what they are staring at. A room literally packed to the ceiling with gifts.

KING GEORGE

Did we count them yet?

LASCELLES

Two thousand five hundred gifts, Sir.
And ten thousand telegrams of
congratulation.

KING GEORGE

And I thought we'd done well.

QUEEN MOTHER

Nothing close to this.

MARGARET is excitedly taking photos.

PHILIP

Don't let anyone see those pictures.
Two million people out of work out
there. Still starving on rations.

MARGARET

Oh, don't be such a stick in the mud.
If people are gloomy out there, we can
always open this place up, put the
presents on show, it'd cheer everyone
up.

QUEEN MOTHER

And we can charge them a schilling to
come and look at them.

PHILIP

If they had any sense they'd storm the
palaces. Have our heads on spikes.

KING GEORGE

How do you want to do this? We can
have people help you open them, make a
list. Then we'll get the secretaries
to start drafting letters of thanks.

ELIZABETH

No. We'll do it all ourselves, won't
we?

PHILIP

Will we?

ELIZABETH

Of course.

PHILIP nervously feels his neck.

19

INT. BEDROOM - BUCKINGHAM PALACE - NIGHT

19

ELIZABETH walks into their bedroom.

ELIZABETH

Did you have a favourite?

PHILIP

I'd have to say the tray cloth spun by Gandhi at his own wheel.

ELIZABETH

Oh, I thought that VERY indelicate. Mummy said it looked like a loincloth. We had the motif translated. You know what it said? "Jai Hind"

PHILIP

What's that?

ELIZABETH

"Victory for India."

PHILIP laughs.

PHILIP

How about you?

ELIZABETH

Margaret gave me a picnic basket, which I thought VERY practical. But best of all was this.

ELIZABETH holds open a box. Inside a Super 8 camera.

PHILIP

Who's that from?

ELIZABETH

Papa.

PHILIP

You're not going to use it now, are you?

ELIZABETH

Is that a dare?

The two fall into one another's arms. The camera lies on the bed.

FADE TO BLACK:

20

FLICKERING SUPER 8 FOOTAGE

20

A newborn infant cries into the lens of the Super-8 camera.

ELIZABETH and PHILIP play with their new baby, CHARLES in the garden at Sandringham. GEORGE struggles to unhook Charles' cardigan - which has become caught on Elizabeth's brooch...

No one speaks. Profound concern on everyone's faces. Eventually the lead SURGEON enters the room.

He manages a reassuring smile. The operation has gone satisfactorily. Relief breaks out in the room.

OVER THIS: the sound of a radio.

RADIO

...in the weeks leading up to the election the Tories had a comfortable lead in the polls, but it now looks like - come election day - that margin has become increasingly narrow, and the outcome is now too close to call...

30

INT. YELLOW DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

30

The still-recuperating KING and QUEEN are sitting in a room listening to the wireless.

But we notice that this is a diminished KING - frail, vulnerable, older-looking - a man who has undergone numerous operations - most recently one to remove his left lung.

The FOOTMEN enter bringing food.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Did you send for food?

KING GEORGE

(hoarsely)

I did. Looks like it's going to be a long night.

(to FOOTMAN)

The fire, please?

(rubbing hands)

A nail-biter.

QUEEN ELIZABETH smiles - glad that the KING is taking interest in things again.

The FOOTMAN goes to put some more logs on the fire.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Mulligatawny?

The QUEEN smells the soup and groans.

KING GEORGE

Yummy.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Marmalade sandwiches?

KING GEORGE

Heaven.

The QUEEN's face falls. Puts the lid back on the soup.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

Would you mind if I left you to bite
your nails on your own?

KING GEORGE

Not at all.
(putting on napkin)
All the more for me.

The QUEEN reaches the door. Manages a concerned smile. The
KING erupts into a fit of COUGHING.

31 INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - NIGHT

31

QUEEN ELIZABETH is in her bedroom, speaking on the telephone
to her eldest daughter.

QUEEN MOTHER

I'm so happy he's eating again. Even
if what he's eating is inedible, and
I'm glad he's taking an interest in
the election.

(a beat)

Will you be able to follow it? Where
are you? Vancouver?

32 INT. BRITISH EMBASSY - WASHINGTON, DC - DAY

32

PRINCESS ELIZABETH, now 25, and the mother of two young
children, is in an Embassy reception room, on the telephone
to her mother.

(We intercut between the two locations as necessary).

ELIZABETH

Washington. We've come to America for
a few days. Philip's downstairs.
Listening on the wireless.

QUEEN MOTHER

Who will he be cheering for? The other
side?

ELIZABETH

You'd have to ask him.

QUEEN MOTHER

I don't need to. It's obvious. He's a
leftist, just like his Uncle. He can't
actually BELIEVE what they stand for.
I expect he does it just to annoy us.

ELIZABETH

You might give him a bit more credit than that.

QUEEN MOTHER

How is he? You said he was unsettled last week.

ELIZABETH

Still a bit unsettled. But looking forward to coming home tomorrow. Try to look at it from his point of view. He was happy in Malta. Very happy. And then we were asked to return...

QUEEN MOTHER

When your father became ill.

ELIZABETH

But if you want to know why he gnashes sometimes...that's the explanation.

QUEEN MOTHER

He'd sooner be in billeted accommodation in Malta than Clarence House in London?

ELIZABETH

He'd sooner be in the Navy. That's his life. And frankly the one community that's been a real family to him.

The QUEEN MOTHER looks up.

QUEEN MOTHER

Why? Whatever's wrong with US?

33 INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - CORRIDOR - MORNING

33

Daylight fills the corridors.

A mouse busying itself in a corner. It sits up, then scurries for safety as it hears...

...the sound of approaching footsteps...

34 THREE PAIRS OF POLISHED BLACK SHOES

34

...turn a corner, and walk purposefully.

Three liveried FOOTMEN carrying newspapers, tea, etc. They head through corridors of the palace.

They reach a door. Knock gently. Unsure what to do, they enter.

35 INT. DRAWING-ROOM - DAY

35

The same (darkened) drawing-room as the night before. The KING is fast asleep in a chair. Curtains are drawn.

The FOOTMEN tiptoe to the curtains, and open them. Light floods in. The KING slowly wakes.

KING GEORGE
What time is it?

FOOTMAN
Eight thirty, Sir.

KING GEORGE
I must have fallen asleep.

The wireless still plays in the corner of the room.

KING GEORGE
And?

VALET
And what, Sir?

KING GEORGE
Who won???

The FOOTMAN presents the KING with the newspapers, (WE DON'T SEE THEM).

The KING looks at the papers, then his face breaks out in a smile. Visibly relieved.

KING GEORGE
Oh, thank goodness!

On the wireless: we hear that the newly (re)elected Prime Minister is arriving at his constituency.

KING GEORGE
What's wrong with you, man? Smile!

The FOOTMAN stops and stares in horror. Another mouse is scurrying across the floor.

It scurries right past the KING himself.

36 EXT. WOODFORD TOWN HALL - DAY

36

CHURCHILL stands on the steps of the town hall, in his home constituency; CLEMMIE by his side.

He is surrounded by TV and FILM cameras. A CROWD of people has turned up to hear him speak.

WINSTON

A hard task lies before us. Fifty million people are now crowded in our small island which produces food for only three-fifths of them, and has to earn the rest from over the seas by exporting manufactures for which we must also first import the raw material. No community of such a size, and standing at so high a level of civilisation, has ever been economically so precariously poised. An ever larger and more formidable world is growing up around us. The realities which confront us are numerous, adverse and stubborn. For the last two years our island has been distracted by party strife and electioneering. What the nation needs is several years of quiet, steady administration. I thank the returning office and all who have assisted, for the faithful and cheerful and efficient way in which they have discharged their duties, and I wish you all - whatever party you belong - good fortune for yourselves and for our Island Home.

CHURCHILL ends the speech by saying...

WINSTON

And now, if you'll excuse me, I must go to Buckingham Palace to ask the King's permission to form a government.

Cheers. CHURCHILL goes through the crowd, being congratulated and clapped. He gets into his car.

37

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

37

A FOOTMAN is on the phone. Listens. Nods.

FOOTMAN

When can we expect him?
(listens)
Right you are.

He looks up at the MASTER OF THE HOUSEHOLD...

FOOTMAN

On his way. Ten minutes.

Another FOOTMAN nods.

38 INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY 38

The MASTER OF THE HOUSEHOLD walks through corridors.

MASTER OF HOUSEHOLD
Five minutes.

39 INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY 39

The MASTER OF THE HOUSEHOLD's office.

FOOTMAN
He's pulling in now.

The MASTER of THE HOUSEHOLD hangs up the phone, gets to his feet. Shoots his cuffs. This is important.

MASTER OF HOUSEHOLD
Right.

40 EXT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY 40

A black car sweeps through the North-centre gate, through the North side arch and into the inner quadrangle.

The car comes to a standstill. The door opens.

A pair of black boots get out and walk to the rear of the car.

The trunk opens and a large black bag is pulled out.

The MASTER of the HOUSEHOLD and two liveried FOOTMEN appear in a doorway.

MASTER OF HOUSEHOLD
Are we happy to see YOU, Sir!

VERMIN CATCHER
People generally are. Until they get the bill.

MASTER OF HOUSEHOLD
This way. Something of an infestation.

The MAN is led into the palace. We PULL BACK to reveal his car on which is written...VERMIN SOLUTIONS.

As they disappear inside, another CAR sweeps into the quadrangle.

It reaches another door, where the King's EQUERRY, a handsome RAF officer aged 37, (Group Capt PETER TOWNSEND), in military uniform is waiting.

Car doors open, and CLEMENT ATTLEE gets out.

TOWNSEND

Mr. Attlee.

ATTLEE

(correcting)

Prime Minister, to you, Captain
Townsend. My resignation has not yet
been accepted.

ATTLEE brushes past TOWNSEND.

TOWNSEND

Forgive me, Sir.

(corrects himself)

Prime Minister.

TOWNSEND closes his eyes, "Damn", then follows.

41 EXT. 28 HYDE PARK GATE - CHURCHILL RESIDENCE - DAY 41

CHURCHILL returns to Hyde Park Square.

42 INT. 28 HYDE PARK GATE - CHURCHILL RESIDENCE - DAY 42

CHURCHILL walks into his house to be told by a servant.

SERVANT

Mr. Eden is here for you?

WINSTON

What? Now?

SERVANT

He said it was important.

WINSTON

I have to get changed. Put my morning
coat out, will you?

43 INT. 28 HYDE PARK GATE - CHURCHILL RESIDENCE - DAY 43

EDEN skulks dangerously in the library. His face cast on
shadows. CHURCHILL enters.

WINSTON

Anthony, it's not a good time...

EDEN

What will you give me?

WINSTON

What?

EDEN

If I'm to be denied the leadership I deserve, that people want, I want to know what compensation I will receive.

WINSTON

I am not yet P.M.

EDEN

I demand to know.

WINSTON

Foreign Office.

EDEN

It's not enough.

WINSTON

It's the jewel in the Crown.

EDEN

No, Winston.

(pointed)

You have that.

WINSTON

Then what? I can't give you the Exchequer, too.

EDEN

Deputy PM.

WINSTON

Why?

EDEN

It's the only office that sends out a clear enough signal...

WINSTON

The King won't accept it. It's unconstitutional.

EDEN

...that I will be your successor...

WINSTON

I have not yet got my feet under the desk. I have not yet been asked by our King to form a government. And you are already talking about succeeding me?

EDEN

I would remind you this a conversation which should not be happening. You should not be there at all.

WINSTON

I just won us an election.

EDEN

Labour just LOST us an election. It should have been a landslide in our favour. Thanks to you, it was close.

CHURCHILL stares at EDEN.

WINSTON

I've never seen you like this before. I thought you above it. Had I known you'd have such pusillanimity in you, I'd never have groomed you the way I have.

EDEN

Groom me in order to humiliate me. Let's be clear. The situation between us has changed. You need ME more than I need YOU now.

CHURCHILL looks at him. There is open hostility in EDEN's face.

WINSTON

You're tired, Anthony. Go home, get some sleep, then, if I may be so presumptuous as to offer some advice. Take a moment to enjoy our victory. We WON.

(a beat)

Now, if you don't mind, I must to go to the Palace.

CHURCHILL turns, and walks out.

44 INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

44

The VERMIN CATCHER is examining tiny marks on the floor.

VERMIN CATCHER

Mmm hmmm.

He makes notes in a note pad.

45 INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - CORRIDOR - DAY

45

He walks along another corridor...

VERMIN CATCHER

I see.

He makes more notes.

46 INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY 46

On hands and knees now, in nooks and crannies...

VERMIN CATCHER

Mm hmmm.

He scribbles more notes.

47 INT. MASTER OF THE HOUSEHOLD'S OFFICE - DAY 47

The VERMIN CATCHER presents his findings..

VERMIN CATCHER

You don't just have mice. You have an infestation of mice. You also have cockroaches, silverfish and moths. Worse...

The VERMIN CATCHER indicates they follow.

The palace staff look at one another, then get to their feet.

48 INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - CORRIDOR - DAY 48

The VERMIN CATCHER leads them down a corridor. Then stops.

VERMIN CATCHER

There.

He gets to his knees. Indicates something in the corner.

VERMIN CATCHER

Droppings. Curtulous Magna.

MASTER OF HOUSEHOLD

What does that mean?

VERMIN CATCHER

Rats.

The MASTER of the HOUSEHOLD's eyes open in horror, then he leaps aside, as...

Doors open and ATTLEE emerges from the Audience Room, accompanied by the King's EQUERRY, (TOWNSEND).

MASTER OF HOUSEHOLD

Prime Minister.

ATTLEE rolls his eyes, and walks past.

ATTLEE

Not any more. Mr. Attlee to you.

49 EXT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY 49

ATTLEE leaves the Palace, takes a last look, then gets into his car.

As ATTLEE's car sweeps out, CHURCHILL's car sweeps into the palace, and pulls up beside the VERMIN CATCHER'S car.

TOWNSEND
Prime Minister. Congratulations.

WINSTON
Not yet, Peter. His Majesty has not asked me to form a government yet. It's Mr. Churchill.

TOWNSEND stares. Thrown.

CHURCHILL walks past him, and into the palace.

50 INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY 50

TOWNSEND follows CHURCHILL inside. They face the stairs.

TOWNSEND
Will you be all right up the stairs, Sir?

WINSTON
Do I have a choice?

TOWNSEND
Afraid not.

WINSTON
Then why in God's name ask the question? My brain is flooded now with tantalising mirages of lifts, hoists, elevators, winches, escalators....

CHURCHILL begins the arduous process of climbing the stairs.

51 INT. PRIVATE AUDIENCE ROOM - DAY 51

KING GEORGE is in the Audience Room making final checks among the drinks. He moves slowly, clearly frustrated by his increasing frailty. He breathes heavily - easily exhausted.

KING GEORGE
(indicating drinks cabinet)
Better top up the whisky and soda. Just in case.
(checking desk)
Notepad and pen in the usual place?

VALET

Yes, Sir.

Another VALET arrives with a large chair.

KING GEORGE

What's that?

VALET

An armchair, Sir. We just thought, a man of his age, it might be more comfortable for him.

KING GEORGE

You're new, aren't you? And obviously not well briefed. This one doesn't sit.

A knock on the door. The EQUERRY enters.

EQUERRY

Mr. Churchill, Sir.

KING GEORGE

Go on, scram. And take that awful thing with you.

The VALETS disappear through the other door, with the ugly armchair.

KING GEORGE turns to face his EQUERRY.

KING GEORGE

Show him in, Peter.

TOWNSEND goes, as CHURCHILL appears in the doorway.

WINSTON

Your Majesty.

KING GEORGE

Prime Minister.

WINSTON

Not yet, Sir.

CHURCHILL lowers himself to one knee with difficulty.

KING GEORGE

Come, Mr. Churchill..

CHURCHILL reaches the final position of supplicancy.

KING GEORGE

Very well. The people have spoken, your party has won the election, and as their Sovereign I invite you to form a Government in my name.

WINSTON

An honour I gratefully accept.

CHURCHILL takes the KING's hand and lowers his head in a "kissing" gesture of fealty and allegiance.

KING GEORGE

Now please, rise.

WINSTON

I'll do my best.

CHURCHILL rises with difficulty.

KING GEORGE

A close one.

WINSTON

Very.

KING GEORGE

Did you get any sleep?

WINSTON

A couple of hours.

KING GEORGE

And? When it became clear? Be honest with me. Your reaction?

WINSTON

I wept, Sir.
(allows himself a smile)
Incontinently.

KING GEORGE

As, I believe, did your predecessor.

WINSTON

Yes. Mr. Attlee will be hurting. But feeling just a fraction of what I felt in 1945.

KING GEORGE

I'm sure.

WINSTON

And how wrong those predictions were. How false those dawns? How delinquent those promises. That Labour should be able to manage the economy. They could barely manage themselves.

KING GEORGE

Yes.

WINSTON

And they were too old. Far too old.

KING GEORGE
Quite. The country needs youth.

WINSTON
Yes.

KING GEORGE
Anyway, congratulations.

WINSTON
And you, Sir.

KING GEORGE
Whatever for?

WINSTON
Your rapid recovery, Sir.

CHURCHILL smiles - putting on a brave face, but clearly concerned for his friend.

KING GEORGE
Oh, thank you.

The KING lights a cigarette, unable to stop.

KING GEORGE
Everyone's rather thrilled. I seem to have bounced back quicker than anyone thought. I wasn't sure what I imagined breathing through one lung would feel like.

(exhales smoke)
Turns out there's barely any difference.

(putting on a brave face)
Though probably still wise to let the Edinburghs do the Australia trip. What say you?

WINSTON
Yes. Will she be prepared?

KING GEORGE
Who?

WINSTON
Princess Elizabeth?

KING GEORGE
Oh, yes. Safe pair of hands, that one. The right girl was born first, if you know what I mean. Or maybe it's because she was born first.

KING GEORGE notices CHURCHILL flinching..

KING GEORGE

Are you sure you're all right, Prime Minister? You won't sit down?

WINSTON

Perfectly.

KING GEORGE

So tell me. What might I look forward to in the King's speech? And who will feature in your Cabinet?

WINSTON

Jock Colville will be coming back as Private Secretary.

KING GEORGE

Oh, good.

WINSTON

I'll bring Lord Alexander back from Ottawa to be Minister of Defence, Pug Ismay, and Eden, of course. He'll be Foreign Secretary. Lots of familiar faces. In essence it's the old team from the war days.

KING GEORGE

But we're not AT war, Prime Minister.

WINSTON

Oh, I beg to differ. The threats facing this country have never been greater. Everything we fought for is in danger of being for nothing. If peace among the Germans and French is not consolidated. If economies fail. If the Russians are not contained.

A flicker behind the KING's eyes. He is concerned.

KING GEORGE

You've been a great hero to me. To this country. We all owe you so very much. But time stops for no man. We must all know when it is time to let the next generation take over.

WINSTON

I am fine, your Majesty. The country has elected me to do a job. I intend to do it.

KING GEORGE

(unconvinced)

Very well.

WINSTON
Your Majesty.

KING GEORGE
Prime Minister.

CHURCHILL bows deeply, and goes.

52 EXT. DOWNING STREET - DAY 52

CHURCHILL arrives at Downing Street with CLEMMIE. They pose for photographs.

Then turn, and enter the building.

53 INT. DOWNING STREET - DAY 53

CHURCHILL enters to be greeted by the entire Downing Street staff. Lined up to greet him.

SECRETARIES, CIVIL SERVANTS, TELEPHONE OPERATORS, MAIDS, etc.

They applaud.

CHURCHILL shakes hands, greeting familiar faces.

CHURCHILL
Thank you, thank you! How are you! And how's the little one? Not so little I expect! A bearded giant by now!

CHURCHILL spots something in a corridor, and stops...

WINSTON
Oh, dear. Chair in the corner? No, no, back by the window, please.

He passes a ticker-tape machine, which rattles away outside the Private Secretary's office, keeping everyone in touch with the outside world, hammering out the latest news.

WINSTON
And let's have this upstairs again.

PRIVATE SECRETARY
Everything as it was before?

WINSTON
Yes. Exactly as it was before.

CHURCHILL reaches the end of the corridor, and enters..

54 INT. CABINET ROOM - DAY 54

Unchanged since 1796, three brass chandeliers, two Corinthian columns, the single portrait of Robert Walpole, the first Prime Minister..

CHURCHILL stands in the doorway, surveys the eerily silent, empty room. A vast table, 20 Adam style chairs.

FLASHCUT TO:

55 CHURCHILL'S IMAGINATION 55

As Cabinet ministers from the previous administration push past and jostle him into the room, taking their seats, mid-discussion.

CRIPPS, BEVAN, ATTLEE, MORRISON, BEVIN, HALL, GREENWOOD, SHINWELL, LAWSON, etc. Air thick with argument and smoke.

CUT TO:

56 INT. CABINET ROOM - DAY 56

CHURCHILL snaps out of his reveries. Sees the empty room. His lips curl with distaste.

WINSTON

Drenched in socialism.

He turns, and walks out.

57 INT. DOWNING STREET FLAT - SECOND FLOOR - DAY 57

The door opens, and CLEMMIE enters, being shown round by an AIDE..

CLEMMIE

And I hoped I'd seen the back of this place. Do you suppose I am the only person that's ever said that on their first day?

The AIDE smiles politely.

CLEMMIE

I will take the Drawing Room downstairs as my private study, and the room next to it, overlooking St. James's Park, as my bedroom. I think this time my husband should stay up here on the second floor.

AIDE

By the lift?

CLEMMIE

Yes.

The AIDE and CLEMMIE exchange a look, then go.

58

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - CORRIDOR - DAY

58

ELIZABETH walks along a corridor. She comes to a door, and stops. She knocks.

KING GEORGE (V.O.)

Come!

59

INT. KING'S BEDROOM - BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

59

ELIZABETH walks into the bedroom.

KING GEORGE

Dear girl, there you are! Welcome back!

She goes over to her father, kisses him. ELIZABETH notices a filled ash-tray by the bedside.

KING GEORGE

I'm sorry, I'd so wanted to greet you properly in the Audience Room.

ELIZABETH

Whatever for?

KING GEORGE

An audience! You returned from official business, I wanted to pay you that respect. But then my cough kept me up all night.

ELIZABETH

I'm sorry..

KING GEORGE

How was it? It wasn't too tiring? All those provincial Canadian mayors? And their wives? They didn't exhaust you with their tittle tattle?

ELIZABETH

I think I've perhaps seen enough rodeos for a while.

KING GEORGE

And the mood? If one were to scratch the surface? All very friendly?

ELIZABETH

How do you mean?

KING GEORGE

No sign of them having had enough?
Wanting to break away?

ELIZABETH

No - all the indications were that the
ties are stronger than ever. That
certainly seemed to be what the
Canadian press was saying.

KING GEORGE

Ah, that's the effect you have on
them!

ELIZABETH

I doubt that. Now how are you?

KING GEORGE

I'm fine. Bouncing back.

ELIZABETH notices the filled ash-trays by the bedside.

KING GEORGE

But I've not bounced back quite enough
to travel again. Not yet, anyway.
Which brings me to my next point..

60

INT. CLARENCE HOUSE - NIGHT

60

ELIZABETH and PHILIP are in their bedroom, getting undressed
and ready for bed..

PHILIP

Ceylon?

ELIZABETH

Then onto Australia.

PHILIP

Oh, God.

ELIZABETH

And New Zealand.

PHILIP

We'll be gone months.

ELIZABETH

They think about three.

PHILIP

On the Royal Yacht? It'll never be
done in three.

ELIZABETH

All right, four.

PHILIP
It's five, at least.

ELIZABETH
(she can't lie to him)
Probably. Yes.

PHILIP
And what for?

ELIZABETH
"To bind the Commonwealth and let
people connect with their royal
family."

PHILIP
The Commonwealth.

ELIZABETH
Yes. The Commonwealth.

PHILIP shoots a frustrated look.

PHILIP
And what am I supposed to do all that
time?

ELIZABETH
You won't be bored. Don't worry we'll
put you to work.

PHILIP
My work is as a naval officer. Not
grinning like an idiot while you cut
ribbons.
(a silence)
What about the children?

ELIZABETH
They'll be fine here.

PHILIP
For five MONTHS?

ELIZABETH
We can't take them.

A beat.

ELIZABETH
Don't make this harder for me. You
knew this would happen.

PHILIP
Eventually, yes. One day.

PHILIP looks troubled.

PHILIP

Not so soon.

61 INT. DOWNING STREET - DAY 61

A working day at Downing Street.

62 INT. SECRETARY'S OFFICE - DAY 62

A busy secretarial pool. Half a dozen female secretaries typing away. Churchill's private secretary (COLVILLE) arrives, and addresses the ladies..

COLVILLE

He's awake now. Wants to see someone.

Several SECRETARIES show willing..

COLVILLE

He's in the bath.

The older (higher ranking) SECRETARIES sit down again.

All heads turn to face a young SECRETARY. Clearly the junior.

The JUNIOR SECRETARY gulps.

63 INT. DOWNING STREET - BATHROOM - DAY 63

The sound of splashing from behind a door. The SECRETARY nervously takes her seat outside the bathroom.

SECRETARY

I'm here, Sir.

WINSTON

And your name?

SECRETARY

Venetia, Sir.

64 INT. DOWNING STREET - BATHROOM - SAME TIME 64

CHURCHILL sits in the bath. Reading tray. Newspapers. Whisky. Cigar. Paraphernalia.

WINSTON

How old are you Venetia?

SECRETARY

Twenty-two, Sir.

WINSTON

Many things can be said about me, but even my worst detractors would say I'm as good as my word, and I give you my word Venetia, I shall not emerge in a state of nature without fair warning.

VENETIA's face: imagining. The sound of splashing continues from behind the door.

WINSTON

Have they told you terrible things about me?

SECRETARY

Sir?

WINSTON

Your colleagues that have worked for me before.

SECRETARY

It is said...you can be difficult.

WINSTON

Difficult?

SECRETARY

And demanding. And that your moods can be hard to predict.

WINSTON

I can be a monster. Did they say that?

SECRETARY

Yes, Sir.

WINSTON

It's true. But you need to be a monster to defeat Hitler. Did Colville give you my box?

SECRETARY

He did, Sir.

WINSTON

What's in it?

The SECRETARY looks down at the locked red box.

SECRETARY

You'd like me to open it?

WINSTON

Unless you have x-ray vision, you will need to open it so that you might tell me what's in it.

The SECRETARY opens it with trembling hands. Inside are all the PM's papers.

SECRETARY
Some papers about rationing.

WINSTON
What else?

SECRETARY
Some papers from the Exchequer.

WINSTON
Anything from the Foreign Office?
About America and Russia?

SECRETARY
No, Sir.

WINSTON
Very well. Then start with the
Exchequer. Read it aloud. Don't be
alarmed if you hear no response. I
will be making mental notes.

The SECRETARY clears her throat, and starts reading.

SECRETARY
"The economic situation we have
inherited is worse than 1949, and in
many ways worse than even 1947.
Confidence in sterling is impaired. In
the present half-year, we are running
into an external deficit at the rate
of £700 million a year compared with
an annual rate of surplus of about
£350 million in the same period a year
ago..."

In the bathroom, CHURCHILL nods off.

65 INT. CABINET ROOM - DAY

65

The Cabinet is assembled. The CHANCELLOR (RAB BUTLER, who speaks with a pronounced impediment) is briefing everyone.

CHANCELLOR
...that means a detewiowation of more
than £1,000 million a year.
(MORE)

CHANCELLOR (cont'd)

Latest estimates show that in 1952, on present trends and policies and without making any allowance for further speculative losses, the United Kingdom would have a deficit on its general balance of overseas payments of between £500 million and £600 million, and the loss to the central gold and dollar reserves in the transactions of the sterling areas as a whole with the rest of the world might be appreciably more. Given these circumstances, I'd be interested to hear the PM's view regarding the prospects for recovery...

Cabinet heads turn. All eyes on CHURCHILL, who stares. Suddenly looking old and frail and lost.

CHURCHILL

In the war I knew what to do. Since coming into power, I've been confronted with a range of issues, particularly economic, that are infinitely complicated, and quite beyond me. I don't know, I can't see my way into these things at the moment...I expect I shall find it but at this moment, this morning, I really don't have an answer for you. We'll think about all this next time we meet...

CHURCHILL gets up, with difficulty and walks out. Everyone gets to their feet out of respect..

But after CHURCHILL has gone, the room is filled with anything BUT respect.

SALISBURY's eyes meet EDEN's. And MACMILLAN's.

66 INT. HOUSE OF COMMONS - DAY 66

EDEN walks through the corridors of House of Commons. He reaches an office, looks right and left, then knocks...

67 INT. SALISBURY'S OFFICE - HOUSE OF COMMONS - DAY 67

Inside: LORD SALISBURY, MACMILLAN, HALIFAX, and three or four other plotters.

SALISBURY

Either we get rid of him now - or we lose the next election and quite possibly lose power for a generation.

(MORE)

SALISBURY (cont'd)

This is your time, Anthony. The party is for you. The country needs you.

EDEN

What should I do? He's party leader. I can't push him out.

SALISBURY

You must go and see the one person who can.

EDEN's face.

SALISBURY

Albert Windsor.

EDEN

You mean the King?

SALISBURY

No, I mean Albert Windsor. The King of England would never dream of telling his Prime Minister to stand down. It would violate every part of the constitution. But...

EDEN

But...?

SALISBURY

Albert Windsor might advise a friend to stand down.

EDEN

I see.

68 INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

68

The King's EQUERRY - Peter TOWNSEND walks along a corridor. He turns a corner, then reaches a door. He knocks.

TOWNSEND

You asked to see me?

69 INT. PRIVATE SECRETARY'S OFFICE - BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY 69

The King's Private secretary, (TOMMMY LASCELLES) is inside, GCB, GCVO, CMG, MC. Military. Aristocratic.

A formidable figure. Intimidating. Conservative

PRIVATE SECRETARY

Ah, Peter. Thanks for coming. The Foreign Secretary has requested an audience with the King this afternoon.

(MORE)

PRIVATE SECRETARY (cont'd)
 Something about a diplomatic reception
 for the Head of the NATO Committee,
 although I fail to see what's quite so
 urgent about that. Anyhow, I thought
 we could squeeze it in at three.

TOWNSEND

That's generally when His Majesty
 takes his walk.

PRIVATE SECRETARY

I realise that, but hoped we might
 combine the two. Think you could make
 that work?

TOWNSEND

Yes, Sir. I'm sure.

70 INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

70

TOWNSEND walks through a corridor, on his way to see the
 King, and passes a drawing room, where the door is open, and
 a dog comes out.

TOWNSEND tuts, and ushers the dog back inside, is about to
 close the door, when he straightens...

TOWNSEND

I'm so sorry.

71 INT. DRAWING-ROOM - DAY

71

PRINCESS MARGARET with her mother, the QUEEN, and with
 ELIZABETH.

QUEEN MOTHER

Not at all. Come in, Peter. We were
 just discussing where to have Xmas.
 Tell me, do you think the King would
 be well enough to go to Sandringham?

TOWNSEND

I do. As a matter of fact, I think it
 would do him the world of good.

QUEEN MOTHER

I do, too. So it's decided. Will you
 join us?

MARGARET looks up.

TOWNSEND

Me?

QUEEN MOTHER

Of course not. You will be spending it with your family.

TOWNSEND

That was the plan. But what would his Majesty's preference be, do you imagine?

QUEEN MOTHER

The King? Given the choice he'd never let you out of his sight, you know that. He's quite devoted to you.

TOWNSEND

Then he can count on me at Christmas, too.

QUEEN MOTHER

But what about your wife?

TOWNSEND

Oh, she'll understand.

TOWNSEND's eyes meet MARGARET's for a moment. A moment longer than is necessary, then goes.

This is spotted by ELIZABETH.

72

EXT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

72

A car pulls up. EDEN gets out. He is greeted by the King's Equerry, TOWNSEND..

TOWNSEND

Afternoon, Sir.

EDEN

Peter.

TOWNSEND

In order to squeeze this meeting in, his Majesty wondered if you'd mind accompanying him on his afternoon walk.

EDEN

Not at all.

TOWNSEND

That's very kind, Sir. Still a little wet underfoot, I'm afraid, after the rain this morning.

EDEN

Don't worry about that.

TOWNSEND

We can provide some Galoshes.

EDEN

Really no need...

TOWNSEND

What size are you?

EDEN

Nine and a half. Though my riding boots are a ten. And my Trench boots were an 11. Make of that what you will.

EDEN and TOWNSEND continue talking, and disappear into the Palace.

73

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

73

ELIZABETH joins MARGARET in Margaret's apartments on the second floor of the palace.

ELIZABETH

I saw it.

MARGARET

What?

ELIZABETH

The look between the two of you.
(a beat)
It's Peter.

Silence.

MARGARET

Nothing's happened.

ELIZABETH

On the contrary. I'd say a great deal has happened. You've fallen for him.

MARGARET

We've fallen for each other.

ELIZABETH

He feels the same way?

MARGARET

You must tell no one. The papers all think I'm for Johnny Dalkeith or Billy Wallace.

ELIZABETH

Mummy and Papa, too, by the way.

MARGARET

But they're just...boys. Whereas Peter is...

ELIZABETH

I can quite see the attraction of Peter. He was a hero in the war. But he has a wife.

MARGARET

He doesn't love her.

ELIZABETH

You only have his word for that.

MARGARET averts her eyes.

ELIZABETH

He has children, too.

MARGARET

He could still be a good father to them. I'd never stand in his way.

ELIZABETH

You've already discussed it?

MARGARET

We have.

ELIZABETH

Oh, Margaret.

MARGARET

Just be happy for me? Can you?
(takes ELIZABETH's hand)
I nearly squealed with happiness when he agreed to come for Christmas.

ELIZABETH

A squeal? That would have been most unbecoming.

MARGARET

Couldn't help myself.

MARGARET stops in her tracks and squeals.

MARGARET

Eeeeeeeekkkkk!!!

ELIZABETH

Yes, all right. No need to prove a point.

MARGARET

Eeeeeeeekkkkkk!!!

MARGARET points. ELIZABETH stops and stares. There, lying in the corner of the room, is a dead RAT.

74

EXT. GARDENS - BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

74

Two pairs of galoshes squelch through the damp grass of Buckingham Palace gardens..

EDEN

Most of this is just a function of age. And none of us can be blamed for growing old. But it means he struggles with his memory, and learning the names of new faces, new ideas, new concepts. He has little or no interest in Home Affairs, focusing almost entirely on issues relating to America and Russia, where quite frankly we are no longer players. He refuses to acknowledge that. And so important domestic matters like reducing rationing, tackling the economy, etcetera, are falling behind.

KING GEORGE

(hoarsely again)

What do you suggest I do?

The King stops - COUGHS loudly. The cough is back again. A harbinger of yet another inevitable operation on the horizon.

EDEN

As Sovereign, of course, there is nothing you CAN do, from a Constitutional standpoint. But as friend, as Albert Windsor? You are the one person I can think of to whom he might listen.

KING GEORGE

But that is where we run into difficulties. You make the assumption that for me to alternate between the two is a simple matter, like flicking a switch. I no longer AM Albert Windsor. That person, of whom I had grown rather fond in the forty-one years I knew him, was murdered on the 11th December 1936 by his elder brother. You're right, Albert Windsor would dearly have liked to say something to his friend, Winston Churchill and tell him to take a step back. Put his feet up. Let a younger generation take over and run the country. But he is no longer with us.

(MORE)

KING GEORGE (cont'd)

That void has been filled by George VI, who turns out to be an officious individual - and a stickler for the rules, and who would no more allow the Sovereign to advise the Prime Minister than stand for office himself.

EDEN

Even when it's in the national interest?

KING GEORGE

The national interest? Or Anthony Eden's interest?

EDEN

Sir?

KING GEORGE

I am aware you harassed Mr. Churchill for the office of Deputy PM. But don't you see in doing so you were robbing ME of my privilege of consent? The rules state quite clearly that in the event of a resignation of a Conservative Party Leader it is the Sovereign that chooses his successor. When my Private Secretary told me you wanted to see me today, the reason I agreed to the audience was to not to hear your grievances about Mr. Churchill, rather to communicate mine about YOU.

EDEN

Sir.

KING GEORGE

The P.M will step down in time. And until then, if I may offer some advice.

EDEN

Please.

KING GEORGE

It's better to be patient and get what you desire in the right time, than have high office thrust upon you when you least expect or want it.

GEORGE VI's haunted eyes. His frail health. Ravaged by the responsibilities of an unwanted Crown.

KING GEORGE

(extends hand)

Foreign Secretary.

EDEN

Your Majesty.

The two MEN shake hands, then head in different directions. Galoshes squelching in the mud.

75

EXT/INT. DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

75

CHURCHILL and CLEMMIE sit alone over dinner.

CLEMMIE

I know one should never believe what one hears, particularly in this place.

WINSTON

But?

CLEMMIE

I heard a rumour Anthony went to see the King yesterday. To express his concern. About your age. Your leadership. Your incapacity.

(a beat)

And to ask him to bid you stand down.

WINSTON

Utter nonsense. Who told you that?

CLEMMIE

I can tell you who told me. Jock Colville's wife.

WINSTON

Mary?

CLEMMIE

Margaret. But not who told her. Or who told them. Or who told the people that told THEM.

WINSTON

The King would never engage in that kind of treachery. He's a stickler for process and procedure.

CLEMMIE

Fine. Ignore me.

WINSTON

If you don't mind I will.

CLEMMIE

The meeting probably never took place. You have nothing to worry about. Don't start to brood, will you?

WINSTON

Brood? About what? Certainly not.

76 INT. DOWNING STREET - STUDY - DAY

76

CHURCHILL is in his study. Brooding. A knock at the door. The door opens and the SECRETARY pops her head round..

SECRETARY

Half hour warning, Sir.

WINSTON

For what?

SECRETARY

Your weekly audience with the King.

WINSTON

Really? I thought he'd had another bronchoscopy.

SECRETARY

He did.

WINSTON

And? He was frail before, must be even frailer now. He's not convalescing?

SECRETARY

No, Sir. He resumed his constitutional duties on the 10th.

WINSTON

(disappointed/brooding)

I see.

VENETIA turns, is about to go, when...

WINSTON

Tell me, Venetia. You have good connections at the palace? With your opposite number?

SECRETARY

Yes, Sir.

WINSTON

Can you establish, without drawing attention to the reason for the question, whether His Majesty has had an audience with the Foreign secretary recently.

SECRETARY

I can try.

WINSTON
Quick as you can?

77 INT. DOWNING STREET - DAY 77

The SECRETARY moves urgently up the grand staircase, and knocks on the door again.

78 INT. DOWNING STREET - STUDY - DAY 78

The SECRETARY enters.

SECRETARY
The answer's yes. The King met with Mr. Eden eight days ago.

WINSTON
Really?

SECRETARY
They went for a walk together in the palace grounds.

WINSTON
I see.

CHURCHILL's face:

WINSTON
I find I'm no longer feeling my best this afternoon, Venetia. Will you make my excuses, beg the King's forgiveness?

SECRETARY
Sir?

WINSTON
I shan't be attending the Audience.

79 INT. DOWNING STREET - DAY 79

A week later. CHURCHILL is in the bath. The SECRETARY speaks through the door...

SECRETARY
The car is waiting, Sir.

WINSTON
What for?

SECRETARY
The weekly audience. We missed it last week, if you remember?

WINSTON

Yes. But by a stroke of misfortune, I find I have an intolerable migraine.

SECRETARY

Oh.

The SECRETARY looks thrown.

SECRETARY

Might I say something else?

WINSTON

Why?

SECRETARY

I said migraine last week.

WINSTON

Fine. Pick any affliction you like. It will certainly be applicable. There isn't an organ left in this body that is functioning as it should.

OVER THIS: the sound of the KING's voice..

KING GEORGE (ON RADIO)

As I speak to you today, I wish you, wherever you may be, a happy Christmas.

80

INT. CHEQUERS - DAY

80

CHURCHILL and CLEMMIE (and members of their extended family) are listening to the King's speech on the wireless.

KING GEORGE (ON RADIO)

Though we live in hard and difficult times, Christmas is, and always will be, a time when we can count our blessings.

Christmas decorations everywhere. A tree in the corner.

CLEMMIE

His voice sounds better. Stronger. And his health must have improved, if they allowed him to go to Sandringham.

(a beat)

When was the last time you saw him?

WINSTON

Weeks ago. It's been a masterpiece of survival, dodging the bullet.

(MORE)

WINSTON (cont'd)

Six weeks on the trot I've found a different ailment that's kept me from attending the private audience with the King. And next week I sail to America, so that's another three weeks there..

KING GEORGE (ON RADIO)

I myself have every cause for deep thankfulness. For not only, by the Grace of God, and through faithful skill of my doctors, surgeons and nurses have I come through my illness. And I have learned once again that it is in bad times that we value most highly the support and sympathy of our friends.

WINSTON

(chuckles to himself)

It must be torture for Anthony.

81 NEWSREEL FOOTAGE OF CHURCHILL IN AMERICA 81

ANTHONY EDEN is watching on television, scowling, as newly elected CHURCHILL visits TRUMAN, and makes history by addressing Congress for the third time.

Basking in the limelight.

FADE TO BLACK:

82 INT. DOWNING STREET - DAY 82

CHURCHILL is back in England, and getting dressed in his morning coat.

Slowly. Resignedly.

He finishes dressing and takes a look at himself in the mirror.

83 INT. DOWNING STREET - DAY 83

Elevator doors open and CHURCHILL emerges to see his surprised-looking SECRETARY. He raises his hands..

WINSTON

I know. I'm late.

SECRETARY

Sir?

WINSTON

But I will go willingly. "When these
graven lines you see, Traveller, do
not pity me; Though I be among the
dead, Let no mournful word be said."
Is the car outside?

SECRETARY

What for?

WINSTON

The private Audience with the King.
(shrugs)
Even I accept I can't put it off any
longer.

SECRETARY

There is no Audience today.

WINSTON

What?
(looks confused)
It's not Tuesday?

SECRETARY

It is, Sir. But the Palace let us know
some time ago the King was going to be
there in person to see off Princess
Elizabeth.

WINSTON

Of course. The Edinburghs are leaving
today.

WINSTON

So no Audience?

SECRETARY

No, Sir.

A smile spreads across CHURCHILL's face.

WINSTON

"Praise the high gods, for in giving
This for man, and this alone,
They have made his chance for living
Shine the equal of their own."

84

EXT. LONDON AIRPORT - DAY

84

A specially converted, four-propeller BOAC Argonaut G-ALHK
Atlanta, stands on the runway. Several black cars with the
Royal Standard fluttering on the bonnet.

A vast collection of bags and suitcases are being loaded into
the hull.

Accompanied by his wife and younger daughter, the KING climbs up steps and enters the plane..

85

INT. PLANE - DAY

85

Inside, the plane has been modified, seats removed for a table to be installed. ELIZABETH and PHILIP, along with the rest of the party, (MIKE PARKER, Philip's old ship-mate and aide-de-camp, MARTIN CHARTERIS, Elizabeth's Private Secretary, several assistants and ladies in waiting).

All stand to say farewell to the KING and QUEEN and MARGARET.

KING GEORGE

Thank you for stepping into my shoes.

ELIZABETH

Thank you for trusting me.

KING GEORGE

I'd be lying if I didn't admit to a little jealousy. Where are you starting? Kenya?

ELIZABETH

Yes. A few days holiday before the hard work begins.

QUEEN MOTHER

How lovely. It's still like the good old days there.

KING GEORGE

Got everything you need? Gallons of quinine?

PHILIP

Yes, Sir. Thank you.

KING GEORGE

And a good rifle?

PHILIP

All packed.

QUEEN MOTHER

Did we buy you some safari clothes?

PHILIP

Ma'am?

QUEEN MOTHER

I heard the last time you wore hand-me-downs from your Uncle.

Voices fall silent. The atmosphere changes. PHILIP stares. Unflinching.

PHILIP

I managed to get to the tailor this time.

KING GEORGE

Good for you.

QUEEN MOTHER

If not, you could always go native. Join the Mau Mau.

PHILIP

(correcting)

Kikuya.

QUEEN MOTHER

What?

PHILIP

That's the indigenous name of the tribe. Mau Mau is an Anglicisation.

QUEEN MOTHER

Quite.

A moment's awkwardness. Little love lost between these two.

KING GEORGE

Well, goodbye my dear.

The KING and QUEEN and MARGARET kiss ELIZABETH farewell, making a fuss of her.

KING GEORGE

I'd say look after her, but this one's quite capable of looking after herself. And the rest of us, too.

He heads to the door..

KING GEORGE

If you need me...I'm on the end of a phone. Or just hit the jungle drums.

He looks at ELIZABETH. As if he knows he's looking at her for the last time.

KING GEORGE

You'll enjoy Kandy. And the Hill Stations. Always rather reminded me of Surrey. See what you think.

And with that, the Royal party is gone.

FADE TO BLACK:

99

FLICKERING SUPER 8 FILM FOOTAGE

99

Handheld by ELIZABETH. Daylight breaks. PHILIP is fast asleep in the bed.

The camera pans 360 degrees, taking in the Treetops hotel room, the view, the wildlife, the African horizon, then coming back and finding a mirror..

And the reflection in the mirror; of a 26-year-old PRINCESS, filming with a Super-8 camera.

ELIZABETH lowers the camera. Stares at herself for a brief moment, in the reflection. The camera continues to whir...

It's as if ELIZABETH senses something. A significance to the moment. She takes her finger off the button.

And stares at her own reflection.

100

INT. DOWNING STREET - DAY

100

The young SECRETARY accompanied by the KING's PRIVATE SECRETARY (LASCELLES) rapidly ascend the main staircase.

101

INT. DOWNING STREET - CHURCHILL'S BEDROOM - DAY

101

A knock on the door. CHURCHILL is in bed, working, surrounded by paperwork and a candle for his cigar.

SECRETARY

The King's Private Secretary.

The forbidding figure of LASCELLES appears in the doorway.

PRIVATE SECRETARY

Prime Minister.

CHURCHILL looks up.

WINSTON

Oh dear. This is bad news.

PRIVATE SECRETARY

I'm afraid so.

WINSTON

How bad?

PRIVATE SECRETARY

"Hyde Park Corner."

CHURCHILL's face: devastated.

WINSTON
 (quiet)
 No. The worst. When?

PRIVATE SECRETARY
 In the course of the night. Quite peacefully, we believe.

CHURCHILL looks at his SECRETARY.

WINSTON
 Call the Foreign Secretary.

SECRETARY
 What shall I say?

WINSTON
 Tell him "Hyde Park Corner". He'll understand.

The SECRETARY goes. CHURCHILL looks up at the King's PRIVATE SECRETARY.

WINSTON
 Has the Princess been notified?

PRIVATE SECRETARY
 We're still trying to get hold of her before the story breaks on the wires.

102 EXT. AFRICAN ROADS - DAY 102

A convoy of four Jeeps kicking up plumes of dust as the royal Party returns from Treetops to Sagana Lodge...

OVER THIS:

RADIO (O.S.)
This is London. It is with the greatest sorrow that we make the following announcement.

103 INT. JEEP - DAY 103

ELIZABETH's face: totally unaware of what has happened in London, stares out of the window of her jeep...

RADIO (O.S.)
It was announced from Sandringham at 1045 today, February 6th 1952, that the King, who retired to rest last night in his usual health, passed peacefully away in his sleep earlier this morning.

Villages pass. ELIZABETH's face, all smiles, all happiness, all freedom and innocence, as she waves to villagers...

RADIO (O.S.)

The BBC offers profound sympathy to her majesty the Queen and the Royal family. The BBC is now closing down for the rest of the day, except for the advertised news bulletins and summaries, the shipping forecasts and gale warnings. Further announcements will be made at 1145, 12 O'Clock and 1215.

104 EXT. SAGANA LODGE - KENYA - DAY 104

The Jeeps pull up at Sagana Lodge.

105 INT. JEEP - SAGANA LODGE - DAY 105

PHILIP looks out of the jeep to see two dozen people waiting to greet the party. The manager of the Lodge. The Queen's private secretary. Police.

Serious faces. Long faces.

PHILIP

What's all this?

ELIZABETH looks out. Sees the look on her Private Secretary's face.

Her expression changes. Understanding instinctively.

106 EXT. SAGANA LODGE - KENYA - DAY 106

The jeeps come to a standstill. Doors are opened. ELIZABETH gets out.

The rest happens as if in slow-motion.

Suddenly soldiers snap to attention. People remove hats. ELIZABETH notices one or two are in tears (or stifling tears).

Her Private Secretary (MARTIN CHARTERIS) steps forward. Removing his hat. Looking her in the eye, knowing full well the impact the next two words will have on her.

PRIVATE SECRETARY

Your Majesty.

The words. The implications.

Going through her like a knife.

107 INT. SAGANA LODGE - KENYA - DAY

107

Outside in the garden, PHILIP is walking with ELIZABETH. They are talking intently. PHILIP comforting her.

The Queen's Private Secretary (MARTIN CHARTERIS) stands by a window, looking out into a garden. MIKE PARKER comes up to him.

PARKER

How soon will we have to go back?

CHARTERIS

Straight away, I'm afraid.

In the garden outside, ELIZABETH and PHILIP continue to walk. Alone

108 INT. SAGANA LODGE - KENYA - AFTERNOON

108

ELIZABETH's bags are packed. Lined up and ready to go. She returns from walking in the garden to see more serious faces.

BOBO MACDONALD, her dresser, steps forward..

BOBO

I'm so sorry, Ma'am.

ELIZABETH

What's the matter?

CHARTERIS

It seems Ms. Macdonald neglected to pack a black dress.

ELIZABETH

Can't we improvise?

CHARTERIS

We've managed to locate a black overcoat. On the royal yacht. That's being sent ahead to the airport.

ELIZABETH

Right.

CHARTERIS

We've also called ahead to London. A hat will be brought onto the plane before you disembark.

ELIZABETH

Thank you.

ELIZABETH looks at the packed bags, then at the journalists and photographers waiting outside.

ELIZABETH
Ready when you are.

CHARTERIS
A word of warning, Ma'am. A good many
journalists outside.

ELIZABETH
That was quick. Where have they all
crawled out from?

CHARTERIS
Royal correspondents mostly. They've
been arriving the last few days.
Assigned to cover the Tour.

ELIZABETH's face: chastened.

ELIZABETH
Of course.

109 EXT. SAGANA LODGE - KENYA - AFTERNOON

109

ELIZABETH emerges from the Lodge, and walks towards the car.
She stops, and looks over to the assembled reporters and...

ELIZABETH
I am so sorry we've got to go back.
I'm afraid I've ruined everybody's
trip.

She turns, then gets into the car.

The car doors close. As the car moves off, one photographer,
deeply moved, puts his camera down in a gesture of respect.

One by one, his colleagues follow suit.

Their cameras are put down, like guns. In a respectful
ceasefire.

ELIZABETH's car drives off.

We track along the JOURNALISTS' faces as she goes.

MATCH CUT TO:

110 INT. DOWNING STREET - CABINET ROOM - DAY

110

More MEN's faces. In a row. The Cabinet in 10 Downing St.

Twenty-four POLITICIANS sitting in eerie, atypical, wordless
silence.

Observing a minute's silence.

Some eyes closed. Some open. Some emotional. Some not. Some religious. Some not.

WINSTON

Thank you.

People relax. Eyes open. Throats cleared.

WINSTON

Messages of condolence to the Queen and the two Princesses will be sent from the Cabinet. At two-thirty today I shall make a statement in the House of Commons. No prayers. From there I will go to St. James's Palace where an Accession Council meeting will be held, to agree on the wording of the proclamation, and to read a draft proclamation of our new sovereign in absentia. Princess Elizabeth is, I am told, determined to fly home, and may already...

(he checks his watch on a chain)

...be en route. I think all of us would be concerned by the prospect of air travel - but a sea voyage could take upwards of 14-days, and delaying the funeral that long would be unacceptable. We will simply have to hope and pray for safe air passage.

111 INT. PLANE - DAY

111

QUEEN and PHILIP are in their private cabin on the plane. The QUEEN stares out of the window..

PHILIP

You all right?

The QUEEN nods.

A knock at the door. The Private Secretary (Martin Charteris) comes to tell the Queen..

CHARTERIS

We'll be stopping in Entebbe shortly, Ma'am. To refuel.

ELIZABETH

Right.

The PRIVATE SECRETARY hesitates, then...

CHARTERIS

May I also just say how very sorry I am.

ELIZABETH
Thank you. It did come a little sooner
than we all expected.

CHARTERIS
I mean that we will not be working
together any more.

The QUEEN looks shocked. PHILIP looks up.

ELIZABETH
Whyever not?

CHARTERIS
Because of your new rank, I will have
to give way to Mr. Lascelles. He is my
senior. That's the way it's done.

ELIZABETH
Oh, no. I'm so sorry.

CHARTERIS bows, then goes.

PHILIP
What a nightmare.

ELIZABETH
Why?

PHILIP
Charteris at least had one foot in the
real world. Tommy Lascelles? His
outlook on our monarchy and it's place
in the world has more in common with
your grandfather. There goes any hope
of us modernising the institution.

ELIZABETH
Who said anything about modernising?

PHILIP
I did.

The QUEEN looks at PHILIP for a moment, then turns, and looks
out of the window again.

112 INT. HOUSE OF COMMONS - DAY

112

A packed House of Commons. As Parliament convenes briefly, to
hear official news of the death.

WINSTON
Mr. Speaker, the House will have
learned with deep sorrow of the death
of His Majesty King George VI.

(MORE)

WINSTON (cont'd)

We cannot at this moment do more than record a spontaneous expression of our grief. The Accession Council will meet at five o'clock this evening, and I now ask you, Sir, to guide the House as to our duties.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

I shall suspend the Sitting of the House until 7 o'clock. When the House resumes at that hour, I shall myself take and subscribe the Oath, according to law, and give an opportunity to right honourable and honourable Members to do the same.

113 INT. ENTEBBE - TERMINAL - DAY

113

The QUEEN and her party walk into Entebbe Airport - a series of small, two story buildings next to one another..

Outside, flashes of lightening and rumbles of thunder.

CHARTERIS

There are storms closing in on the airfield. They think it'll be a couple of hours before we can take off again..

ELIZABETH

Right.

CHARTERIS

I asked them to bring us some water...

A person from the airport brings water...

PHILIP

I wouldn't touch it.

CHARTERIS

And sandwiches.

PHILIP

Wouldn't touch them, either.

ELIZABETH

I've no appetite anyway.

PHILIP

Stay here. I'll see if I can find us something that's been boiled.

PHILIP goes.

114 INT. ENTEBBE AIRPORT - EVENING 114

PHILIP goes to talk to some local airport workers, requesting tea, then walks back to where he'd left ELIZABETH..

...but she's no longer there. She's gone.

115 INT. ENTEBBE - TERMINAL - EVENING 115

The QUEEN walks through the deserted terminal. Up ahead, she sees something.

116 INT. ENTEBBE - TERMINAL - DAY 116

A small boy is playing on his own. With a ball. The QUEEN moves closer.

ELIZABETH

Hello.

The BOY looks up to see her.

ELIZABETH

What are you doing here?

BOY

Waiting for my father.

ELIZABETH

And who is your father?

BOY

He is the air traffic controller. He had to come because a plane is landing. Because the King died somewhere.

ELIZABETH

Do you often come with him?

BOY

When he lets me. When I don't have school.

ELIZABETH

And you like going with him? Like spending time with him? Alone?

BOY

Yes. Very much.

ELIZABETH

Why?

BOY

He teaches me things.

ELIZABETH

Such as?

BOY

How to drive a car. He lets me sit on his lap.

ELIZABETH

Yes, I did that. Oh, that's very exciting.

BOY

How to kill a fish after you catch it.

ELIZABETH

How?

BOY

Like this...

The BOY mimes a flapping fish being struck on the head.

ELIZABETH

What else?

BOY

How to be wise.

ELIZABETH

Oh?

(raised eyebrow)

I should like to know that. How is one wise?

BOY

Be quiet. Say nothing at all.

ELIZABETH

Yes, that's very wise. You're very lucky to have a father who gives you advice like that. Will you please thank him for coming in to do his job on a night like this.

The BOY looks up to see a panicked PHILIP, the PRIVATE SECRETARY (MARTIN CHARTERIS) a dozen uniformed SOLDIERS, walking slowly towards them...

Relieved to have found their Queen safe and sound.

ELIZABETH

Don't worry about them. They're harmless.

(a beat)

Most of them.

ELIZABETH gets to her feet, and goes.

117 INT. HOUSE OF COMMONS - DAY 117

In the house of Commons, CHURCHILL swears allegiance to the new Queen, and signs the scroll..

WINSTON

I swear by Almighty God that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her majesty Queen Elizabeth, her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God.

118 INT. HOUSE OF LORDS - DAY 118

In the house of Lords, the Lords are in a line waiting, one by one, to sign the oath of allegiance...

119 INT. SANDRINGHAM - DAY 119

TOWNSEND walks along a corridor. He knocks on the door.

VOICE

Come in.

TOWNSEND enters to see the forbidding figure of LASCELLES. In his office. Sitting in shadows.

TOWNSEND

You asked to see me, Sir?

LASCELLES

Yes, come in.

120 INT. PRIVATE SECRETARY'S OFFICE - SANDRINGHAM - DAY 120

TOWNSEND closes the door. Apprehensive.

LASCELLES

Under normal circumstances following the death of a member of the royal family the equerry attending to the deceased member returns to the division of the armed forces from which they were seconded and resumes their career.

(indicates chair)

Do sit down.

TOWNSEND

Thank you, Sir.

TOWNSEND sits.

LASCELLES

In your case I had assumed that following the death of His late Majesty, you would, at the earliest appropriate moment, be resuming your duties with the Royal Air Force.

TOWNSEND

Yes, Sir.

LASCELLES

I mentioned this to the Queen this morning, who seemed very disappointed, and she asked me, quite unusually, to ask you whether you might like to reconsider such a departure.

TOWNSEND

Sir?

LASCELLES

She felt that you had enjoyed an uncommonly close understanding with her late husband, and had earned not just his trust, but the trust and affection of the whole family.

TOWNSEND

Thank you, Sir.

LASCELLES

In the light of this, she wondered, and I should make clear that I strongly discouraged this in the room, whether you might consider staying on in a new role. As Comptroller of the Queen's Household.

TOWNSEND

I see.

LASCELLES

A kind, and generous offer, as befits the widow of a kind and generous man. But while I'm sure you're greatly flattered, I don't expect you to accept the post. Hence my discouragement of the offer. I didn't want the Queen to suffer the embarrassment of refusal.

TOWNSEND

Why would I not accept it?

LASCELLES

You're asking the wrong question. Why would you?

TOWNSEND looks up.

LASCELLES

You're a decorated war hero, still in your prime. Comptroller of the Queen's Household has no military associations. Doesn't play to your strengths. It would keep you away from your wife, and family. Now's the natural time for a break. After all, the person with whom you enjoyed the "uncommonly close understanding" is deceased.

TOWNSEND

I...er...

LASCELLES

Unless I am missing something. Unless there is someone ELSE with whom you enjoy an "uncommonly close understanding" which would make accepting the post more attractive.

TOWNSEND

I don't know what you are referring to.

LASCELLES

Don't you, Group Captain Townsend? Husband and father?

TOWNSEND

No, Sir.

LASCELLES

You are probably telling yourself that because nothing has happened so far that no one can know. Allow me to disavow you of this delusion. Within the close community of those serving the family I regret to tell you, the talk -- ugly talk, unbecoming talk, tittle tattle -- is of little else.

LASCELLES looks at TOWNSEND.

LASCELLES

I'm aware of the toll that round-the-clock service has on the private lives of those that serve. I am also aware of the feelings generated by continued close proximity to the people you are working for but I would hate you to mistake those feelings for anything else.

TOWNSEND

Please pass my gratitude to the Queen for the offer. I should very much like to consider the matter for forty-eight hours. If I may.

LASCELLES

Take longer. Seventy-two hours. A week. Discuss it with your wife. Closely. Make the right decision.

TOWNSEND

Sir.

The two MEN look at one another. No love lost.

LASCELLES

That'll be all.

TOWNSEND turns, and walks out.

121

INT. CORRIDOR - SANDRINGHAM - DAY

121

TOWNSEND emerges from the room. Shaken by the conversation. A PAGE is waiting for him.

PAGE

For you, Sir.

TOWNSEND

Thank you.

TOWNSEND opens the envelope, and pulls out the note inside..

He looks at the writing, then covers it, and looks left and right in case anyone has noticed...

He looks at the writing again. This time we see it..

"I MUST SEE YOU"

122

EXT. SANDRINGHAM HOUSE - DAY

122

TOWNSEND goes out to a yard with Jeeps. He gets into one of the jeeps, and drives out.

123

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

123

TOWNSEND drives out into the estate. Up ahead, he sees a horse tethered...

TOWNSEND pulls up in his jeep.

124 EXT. MEETING PLACE - DAY

124

There TOWNSEND meets MARGARET. She is inconsolable.

MARGARET

Hold me.

TOWNSEND

My poor, darling.

MARGARET allows him to envelop her in his arms. He holds her tight. It's almost paternal.

MARGARET

I need you so badly.

TOWNSEND

I'm here for you.

MARGARET

No, you're not. How can you be? They will post you somewhere else. They will put you back to the Air Force, and send you somewhere. I told my mother she had to keep you, that she had to insist on your staying. She said she would do everything to try.

MARGARET looks up.

MARGARET

If they asked you, would you?

TOWNSEND

You're asking the wrong question. Why would I not?

They fall into one another's arms.

125 INT. CABINET MEETING - DAY

125

The Cabinet is assembled. EDEN walks in, and takes his seat in his regular chair.

EDEN

The PM won't be joining us this morning being very much tired with all the emotion of yesterday.

SALISBURY

So where is he?

EDEN

(pointed)
He's still asleep.

The cabinet ministers look at one another.

EDEN

So in his absence, I will preside.

A round of clearing throats.

EDEN

The Queen's flight is now over Italy,
having left El Adem airfield...

SALISBURY

Wait a minute, Foreign Secretary.

EDEN

What?

SALISBURY

If you are presiding over the meeting
on the PM's behalf, shouldn't you be
sitting in the appropriate chair.

SALISBURY indicates the empty PM's chair; the only chair with
arms.

EDEN looks at the chair...

EDEN

I really don't think...

EDEN stops himself. He looks back at his colleagues.

EDEN

Very well.

EDEN gets to his feet and walks over to the PM's chair. The
significance of the moment is not lost on anyone.

EDEN pulls back the chair, looks at his fellow cabinet
colleagues, and sits in the chair.

The chair he craves with every fibre in his body.

EDEN

The Queen's flight is now over Italy,
having left El Adem airfield in Libya
at 5 o'clock this morning. She is
expected to touch down in
approximately three hours. At the
Accession Council meeting yesterday it
was agreed that a cross-party
delegation would meet her, along with
Privy Councillors, etc...

SALISBURY looks round the room at the other ministers.

Afterwards: the plotters gather round EDEN.

SALISBURY

You must have felt it. The respect in the room. Their desire to be led. By you.

EDEN

What else do you want me to do? Short of pushing Winston under a bus, I cannot force him out. I went to see the King who was never able to have that conversation with the PM. Events now need to take their natural course. He needs to stumble and he needs to fall. Don't forget, at present it's just a few of us that know just how bad the situation is. It needs a public humiliation to bring his incapacity into the open.

SALISBURY

The eulogy.

EDEN

What?

SALISBURY

He's going to have to address the nation. Connect with the mood of the country and lead from the front. You think he's in a fit state to do that?

EDEN

God, no. He's in no state to do anything. He will mix-up his words or forget his lines. One way or another it'll be a disaster.

SALISBURY

Right.

EDEN

But shouldn't we prevent that? Not for his sake, but for all our sakes. It might diminish the occasion.

SALISBURY

You know sometimes, Anthony, I think you really only have yourself to blame for your years in Winston's shadow. If you want the top job, you have to be ruthless. It's what people want from their leaders. The killer instinct. The absence of doubt. You yourself said it needs a public humiliation. I'm not suggesting you thrust a knife in his heart.

EDEN

Just to stand back and let him thrust
one into his own.

127 INT. DOWNING STREET - CHURCHILL'S BEDROOM - DAY 127

In his bedroom, CHURCHILL continues to snore, fast asleep.
Lost to the world. In the realm of his dreams.

The only remaining place where there are no plots against
him.

128 INT. PLANE - DAY 128

QUEEN and PHILIP are in the separate cabin reserved for them
at the back of the plane.

PHILIP looks out of a window.

PHILIP

Where will we live? As a family?

ELIZABETH

There will be pressure on us to move
to Buckingham Palace.

PHILIP

I would prefer not to do that.

Silence.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

I don't want the children to grow up
in that mausoleum.

ELIZABETH

Just saying there will be pressure.

PHILIP

By all means use the place as an
office, but our home, our FAMILY home,
should remain at Clarence House.

ELIZABETH

That will be difficult.

PHILIP

Why? You always said you were never
happy in the palace yourself.

ELIZABETH

I wasn't.

PHILIP

Then why repeat mistakes? Generation
after generation?

(MORE)

PHILIP (cont'd)
In the interest of 'tradition'? You're
the person who can change it now.

ELIZABETH
All right. Well, let's not rattle the
cage now.

PHILIP
I'm not rattling the cage.

ELIZABETH
You're rattling the cage.

PHILIP
I am having a conversation.

ELIZABETH
In the wrong place at the wrong time.

PHILIP
You started it, dear.

ELIZABETH
There'll be the right moment to
discuss turning everything on it's
head...

PHILIP
(hands raised innocently)
I'm turning nothing on it's head.

ELIZABETH
You're turning ME on MY head.

PHILIP
I'm just saying there's a brief moment
now where we should strike, and catch
them all by surprise.

ELIZABETH
Who?

PHILIP
The old guard. The firm. Who'll want
to keep everything exactly as it was.
And who'll want to keep me out of the
picture.

ELIZABETH
You know your problem? You see
conspiracy where there is none.

PHILIP
I see it where it's obvious. Your head
is buried in the sand, like all the
other ostriches in your family.

She rolls her eyes.

ELIZABETH

This isn't a moment to 'strike', and
'catch them by surprise'. This isn't a
military operation.

PHILIP

More's the pity.

ELIZABETH

My father has died. I have no thoughts
beyond that. Now if you'd pass me that
coat...

PHILIP passes ELIZABETH the black coat.

ELIZABETH

I'd like to get ready.

PHILIP nods, and leaves her alone in the cabin.

129

EXT. LONDON AIRPORT - DAY

129

ATTLEE, CLEMENT DAVIES, LORD WOOLTON, HARRY CROOKSHANK,
SALISBURY, LORD CHAMBERLAIN, LORD CHANCELLOR, and the DUKE OF
GLOUCESTER stand by the airport.

All in sombre, respectful mourning wear they stand awkwardly
awaiting the arrival of the plane, saying little to one
another.

A car arrives and a frail-looking CHURCHILL gets out. He
walks over and takes his position standing next to EDEN.

EDEN

(pointed)

Good morning.

WINSTON

Anthony.

EDEN

I trust you slept well.

CHURCHILL turns; looks at EDEN.

WINSTON

I did.

A pause.

WINSTON

Though I was briefly troubled by a bad
dream.

EDEN

Oh.

WINSTON

Would you like to hear it?

EDEN

Not particularly.

WINSTON

Go on. You may be able to shed light on it. In my dream a close friend, a family friend, and lifelong political ally went to see the late King behind my back and plotted against me.

EDEN looks at WINSTON..

WINSTON

What do you make of that?

EDEN

I'm afraid I don't share the modish fixation with the analysis of dreams.

WINSTON

But hearing it, what advice would you give me?

EDEN

My advice would be simple. I recommend that you spend more time awake.

A ripple among the politicians. The flight has arrived.

130

EXT. RUNWAY - DAY

130

The plane carrying the QUEEN taxis to a halt. Steps are pushed to the door.

The first person to climb the steps is LASCELLES.

131

INT. PLANE - DAY

131

The QUEEN finishes buttoning the long black coat over her beige dress. The door opens.

LASCELLES walks in. Bows from the neck.

LASCELLES

Your Majesty.

LASCELLES hands over a black, (feathered), hat.

LASCELLES

I've been asked to give you this.

ELIZABETH

Thank you.

LASCELLES
 (to CHARTERIS)
 It's all right, Charteris. I'll take
 over from here.

CHARTERIS
 Yes, Sir. Your Majesty.

ELIZABETH
 Thank you, Martin. For everything.

ELIZABETH shakes his hand, he goes. The OLD GUARD now closing
 protectively in around the Crown.

LASCELLES
 Ready, Ma'am?

PHILIP moves to escort her.

PHILIP
 It's all right. I'll escort her down.

LASCELLES
 No, Sir. If you don't mind.
 (a beat)
 The Crown has precedence.

LASCELLES blocks PHILIP's path. PHILIP is stung, "What?",
 then looks at ELIZABETH, who shoots him a look...

Then averts her eyes. And heads out of the door.

132 EXT. LONDON AIRPORT - DAY 132

The QUEEN emerges from the plane. And walks slowly down the
 steps.

Waiting for her: a sea of old, conservative, white-haired
 MEN.

ELIZABETH so young, so feminine, so innocent by comparison.

She reaches the bottom of the steps, and is greeted by
 CHURCHILL.

WINSTON
 Your Majesty.

Followed by EDEN, SALISBURY, ATTLEE, MOUNTBATTEN, etc.

133 INT. BOAC PLANE - SAME TIME 133

PHILIP, a forgotten figure, watches the scene unfold from the
 top of the steps. He is joined by MIKE PARKER.

MIKE

Give it a few days. It'll all settle down.

PHILIP

No, it won't. And you know it.

134 EXT. LONDON AIRPORT - AFTERNOON 134

The QUEEN gets into one of the big black royal cars (known as 'hearses'), joined by PHILIP.

The royal car, bearing the sovereign's coat of arms on its roof, drives away, royal standard fluttering.

135 INT. DOWNING STREET - NIGHT 135

A microphone is being prepared by technicians. Like executioners preparing the gallows and the guillotine.

CHURCHILL walks into the room. Stares at the microphone.

He walks over to his seat. He pulls out a handwritten speech. The producer nods solemnly.

CHURCHILL composes himself for a moment, then...

WINSTON

When the death of the King was announced to us yesterday morning there struck a deep and solemn note in our lives which, as it resounded far and wide, stilled the clatter and traffic of twentieth-century life, and made countless millions of human beings around the world pause and look around them.

136 EXT. SANDRINGHAM HOUSE - NIGHT 136

The Royal car carrying the QUEEN arrives outside Sandringham House. Staff are lined up outside to greet their new Sovereign.

WINSTON (V.O.)

The King was greatly loved by all his peoples. He was respected as a man and as a prince. The simple dignity of his life, his manly virtues, his sense of duty - when he assumed the heavy burden of the Crown and succeeded his brother - his example as a husband and a father in his own family circle, his courage in peace or war - all this we have seen and we have greatly admired.

The staff members bow and curtsy in respect and deference.

137 INT. SANDRINGHAM - NIGHT 137

ELIZABETH walks into Sandringham House where she is greeted by the QUEEN MOTHER and Princess MARGARET.

WINSTON (V.O.)

The greatest shocks ever felt by this island fell upon us in his reign. Never in our long history were we exposed to greater perils of invasion and destruction. The late King lived through every minute of this struggle with a heart that never quavered and a spirit undaunted.

A moment that is fraught with meaning and emotion.

First a tear-stained MARGARET greets her, with a curtsy, indicating precedence.

WINSTON (V.O.)

Though deeply smitten by physical afflictions he felt and shared the sufferings of his peoples as if they were his own. During these last months the King walked with death as if death were a companion, an acquaintance whom he recognized and did not fear.

Then the QUEEN MOTHER. Curtseying, deeply, deferentially. And kissing her daughter's hand.

138 INT. DOWNING STREET - NIGHT 138

CHURCHILL continues with his broadcast, reading his speech...

WINSTON

In the end death came as a friend, and after a happy day of sunshine and sport, and after "good night" to those who loved him best, he fell asleep as every man or woman who strives to fear God and nothing else in the world may hope to do.

139 EXT. CHURCH OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE - SANDRINGHAM - SAME TIME 139

To establish. A 16th-Century, carrystone building on the grounds of Sandringham. Used for private worship and memorials by the royals for centuries.

140 INT. CHURCH OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE - SANDRINGHAM - SAME TIME

ELIZABETH enters the Parish Church at Sandringham where an open coffin lies, draped in the royal standard. Above her, a chancel with carved angels frames the silver altar.

WINSTON (V.O.)

Now I must leave the treasures of the past and turn to the future. Famous have been the reigns of our queens. Some of the greatest periods in our history have unfolded under their sceptres.

ELIZABETH approaches the coffin, and looks at her father, etiolated, alabastered, blue-lipped.

WINSTON (V.O.)

Queen Elizabeth II, like her namesake, Queen Elizabeth I, did not pass her childhood in any certain expectation of the Crown. She is also heir to all our united strength and loyalty.

ELIZABETH bends down, and places a kiss on her father's brow.

WINSTON (V.O.)

She comes to the throne at a time when a mankind stands uncertainly poised on the edge of catastrophe.

Then she turns, and walks out, holding in the tears. Not wanting the ESTATE WORKERS to see her emotion.

WINSTON (V.O.)

Let us hope and pray that her accession to our ancient Throne may be the signal for a brightening salvation of the human scene. Tomorrow the proclamation of her sovereignty will command the loyalty of her native land and of all other parts of the British Commonwealth and Empire.

141 INT. DOWNING STREET - NIGHT

141

CHURCHILL, visibly tired, voice beginning to fade, wraps up the broadcast..

WINSTON

I, whose youth was passed in the august, unchallenged and tranquil glories of the Victorian era, may well feel a thrill in invoking once more the prayer and the anthem, "God save the Queen!"

CHURCHILL finishes. He looks up. The room - full of producers and technicians and civil servants - is deathly quiet.

CHURCHILL
Was that all right?

No one able to speak. All blown away.

FADE TO BLACK:

142 INT. CORRIDOR - SANDRINGHAM - THE FOLLOWING MORNING 142

A uniformed PAGE walks through a corridor, carrying newspapers. He hands the newspapers to a MAID.

The MAID knocks on the door.

MAID
Newspapers, Ma'am.

143 INT. SALISBURY'S HOUSE - DAY 143

SALISBURY sits in his bed reading the newspapers.

144 INT. EDEN'S HOUSE - DAY 144

EDEN sits in his bed reading the newspapers.

145 INT. ATTLEE'S HOUSE - DAY 145

ATTLEE sits in his bed reading the newspapers.

146 INT. DOWNING STREET - DAY 146

CHURCHILL sits in his bed, reading the newspapers. Rave reviews in newspapers from all over the world.

147 INT. DOWNING STREET - DAY 147

CHURCHILL is getting ready. CLEMMIE pops her head round the corner..

CLEMMIE
You're late.

WINSTON looks up with difficulty.

WINSTON
Almost there.

CLEMMIE
Unbecomingly late.

CLEMMIE goes. CHURCHILL straightens, a cunning glint in his eye. We realize his slowness is intentional.

"Snap", a moment later the door opens again...

CLEMMIE
Un-pardon-ably late!

148 INT. ST. JAMES'S PALACE - DAY

148

CHURCHILL arrives outside St. JAMES's. He enters the building via the Ambassador's Court Entrance. He walks slowly up stairs, towards the large upstairs room. He reaches a door, through which we hear the voice of the new QUEEN...

She reads her Accession statement. CHURCHILL listens...

ELIZABETH (O/S)
 ...at this time of deep sorrow, my heart is too full for me to say more to you to-day than that I shall always work, as my father did throughout his reign, to up-hold constitutional government and to advance the happiness and prosperity of my Peoples, spread as they are all the world over.

"CLICK", CHURCHILL enters the room.

149 INT. ST. JAMES'S PALACE - DAY

149

The room is packed with British establishment. The Court at St. James's. Lords, Ladies, Bishops, Government Ministers, Privy Councilors, Mayor, Aldermen of the City of London...

Most wear grand, full ceremonial dress. Some wear morning coats. All heads turn as CHURCHILL enters. Making an entrance. As ever.

The QUEEN finishes...

ELIZABETH
 I pray that God will help me to discharge worthily the duties and responsibilities of Sovereignty, this heavy task that has been laid upon me so early in my life.

CHURCHILL makes his way through the crowds. Reaches EDEN.

EDEN
 You know, someone should buy you a new watch.

Both bow from the neck as the QUEEN passes them, leaving..

EDEN
You are incorrigible.

WINSTON
That may be, Anthony. But I am also
still leader.

CHURCHILL stands by as one after another of the white-haired members of the establishment line up to congratulate him on his speech.

EDEN walks away. Frustrated.

150 INT. CLARENCE HOUSE - DAY 150

ELIZABETH and PHILIP arrive back at CLARENCE HOUSE to be greeted by their staff. A nanny steps forward.

NANNY
Welcome back, Ma'am.

ELIZABETH
Thank you.

NANNY
Will you come and see the children?

ELIZABETH
In a moment.

She walks down a corridor, and disappears into a room alone. Her two children, CHARLES and ANNE are neglected.

One of the children is crying. PHILIP goes to tend to them.

151 INT. ROOM - CLARENCE HOUSE - DAY 151

ELIZABETH goes into a room, and locks the door behind her. She sits in a room alone as...

152 EXT. LONDON STREETS - DAY 152

State trumpeters sound their trumpets. The Procession of Officer and Arms carrying maces, moves through streets, reaching Charing Cross...

153 EXT. CHARING CROSS - DAY 153

The HERALDS announce to the world...

HERALD

Whereas it hath pleased Almighty God to call to His Mercy our late Sovereign Lord King George the Sixth, the Crown is solely and rightfully come to Princess Elizabeth Alexandra Mary, who is now become Queen Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God, Queen of this Realm and of all Her other Realms and Territories Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith, to whom Her lieges do acknowledge all Faith and constant Obedience, and with hearty and humble Affection beseech God, by whom Kings and Queens do reign, to bless Elizabeth the Second with long and happy Years to reign over us.

154 INT. ROOM - CLARENCE HOUSE - DAY

154

ELIZABETH suddenly, quite distressingly, bursts into tears.

Her shoulders shake and convulse with pent-up emotion. Tears stream down her face.

Slowly, her emotions subside. The ripples fade away, leaving calm, unbroken glass.

She wipes the tears from her face. She composes herself. Concentrates.

Presently it's as if there has been no emotion whatsoever. The pain, fear, loneliness and mourning locked away deep within her.

And the key thrown away.

It is the last time we will ever see her weep. Or express emotion so freely.

ELIZABETH WINDSOR stares into the camera. Aged 26, but already subjugated. Erased.

A prisoner within the gilded carapace that is...

...ELIZABETH REGINA.

BLACKOUT