

A DELIBERATE REBELLION

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FADE IN:

EXT. 9TH LANCERS GARRISON - AMBOLA INDIA - DAY (MAY 1857)

In the early morning, as mist lingers from the late-night downpour, troops mount their horses and wait in a large glen rife with tall wet grass. They sit straight in the saddle and cradle their rifles in anticipation of what is to come. Their leader, Lieutenant Colonel DEVLIN MOUNTCASTER approaches the group and gives last minute instructions.

MOUNTCASTER

Men of the 9th Lancers, I have every confidence in your abilities and passion for justice. We will proceed with force and determination.

He surveys his men.

MOUNTCASTER (CONT'D)

This is a blatant rebellion and we must crush it.

Mountcaster's second in command, Major CLAYTON DUNN, adds to his commander's comments, while struggling with an anxious horse. He addresses several dozen Indian soldiers first.

DUNN

We are marching against sepoy's such as yourselves. You must understand they will be killed for their insurrection.

The soldiers don't respond, but give the impression they approve.

DUNN (CONT'D)

We all have a stake in this. We will not fail.

MOUNTCASTER

It is time to move out.

He looks to the heavens and then his men.

MOUNTCASTER (CONT'D)

May God speed?

He motions for them to head out. They can see white patches of smoke and hear numerous gunshots in the distance.

EXT. DESERTED VILLAGE - DAY

As they get closer, they see rebel sepoy running to hide behind buildings and several of them on horseback; ready for a fight.

The Lancers charge into the fray without regard for the consequences. But before confronting the enemy, a large number of sepoy from the regiment change direction and ride off further to the northeast, neglecting their duty.

The exchange of fire is rapid and costly to both sides. The soldiers charge with abandon; the enemy is cut down in quick fashion, but a small number of Lancers are wounded and several die from their wounds.

Fortunately, the rebel sepoy begin to retreat. The British pick up their dead, place them on horses, and vacate the area; leaving many rebel sepoy dead on the ground.

EXT. 9TH LANCERS GARRISON - DAY

The 9th Lancers congregate in the same glen. They dismount, place their dead in a segregated area, and assemble around their leader.

MOUNTCASTER

We must cherish our victory, but pay homage to our dead. We are a superior force but certainly not invincible.

DUNN

(determined)

We will beat those bastards down.

Mountcaster paces for a moment.

MOUNTCASTER

As I stand here before you today, I swear the sepoy will regret rebelling against the British Empire.

The soldiers hug in a true sense of camaraderie.

MOUNTCASTER (CONT'D)

It'll be bloody hell to pay.

They all cheer in unison.

EXT. LEADENHALL STREET - EAST INDIA HOUSE - DAY (JANUARY 1856)

Various carriages pass one another while pedestrians crowd the sidewalks on a dreary overcast morning.

INT. EAST INDIA HOUSE - EAST INDIA COMPANY HEADQUARTERS - SECOND FLOOR - DAY

The head of the East India Company, NIGEL MANCROFT, sits at his massive desk reviewing financial reports while waiting for his nine o'clock with RICHARD CLARKE, owner of The Merchant Traders of London. He casually sips his tea as he plunges through the reports with exceptional speed. The door is opened and his secretary, BERYL, walks in and garners his attention.

BERYL

Sir, Mister Clarke is here.

MANCROFT

Send him in by all means.

Richard Clarke, tall, skinny and impeccably dressed, wastes no time in taking a chair and sitting directly in front of Mancroft.

CLARKE

Nigel, you always impress me with the amount of work you have crammed on your desk.

MANCROFT

(grins)

It's what makes the world go around or at least the East India Company.

Clarke gives out a faint laugh. Mancroft pushes a few binders aside and picks up a fairly large binder. He opens it up and takes out several neatly arranged parchment papers.

MANCROFT (CONT'D)

I have reviewed your proposal. I have to admit even with our depots and factories ideally positioned in India, we could use some help in Delhi.

CLARKE

(smiles)

Splendid!

MANCROFT

I haven't finished. I am reluctant to allow an independent company to do business there. You can understand that.

CLARKE

We certainly wouldn't be in the way if that's what you mean.

Mancroft, heavy set with a dark brown beard and wavy hair, gets up and goes over to a small bar, grabs two glasses and a bottle of Irish whiskey. He fills both glasses and gives one to Clarke before he takes a seat.

MANCROFT

Your company has an exemplary history. I will give you that.

He takes a long sip of his whiskey.

MANCROFT (CONT'D)

I must assume you won't be traveling to India so who will be minding the store?

CLARKE

My son-in-law.

MANCROFT

Reginald Fitzsimmons? I thought he just joined the firm.

CLARKE

He appears perfectly capable; at least his confident demeanor and boisterous bravado suggests he is.

MANCROFT

(laughs loudly)

I do remember his lavish story telling at the wedding. By the way, how is your daughter doing?

CLARKE

Mary is fine. She's anxious to go to India.

MANCROFT

I will tell you this now. All proceeds will be taxed by the East India Company and the crown. The residual will be in your pocket.

Mancroft sits back in his chair; staring at his near empty glass.

MANCROFT (CONT'D)

I believe there are a number of abandoned facilities in Delhi. We will procure one where you can set up shop.

CLARKE

You won't be disappointed.

Mancroft tops off and they tap their glasses together.

MANCROFT

Enjoy the rest of your day; gloomy as it is.

Clarke stands, adjusts his tie and coat and departs a happy man.

EXT. FITZSIMMONS RESIDENCE IN DELHI - DAY (SIX MONTHS LATER)

From where REGGIE FITZSIMMONS stands in his front garden, he can see the faded white façade of the Himalayas: a distance away on the clear morning horizon. He takes in a few deep breaths of fresh air as he hears a carriage stop behind him. He casually walks over to the carriage and jumps in; smiling at DOC MANWARING, the driver.

MANWARING

Good day, sir. It's a bright and beautiful one.

REGGIE

Ah, the grandeur of India.

Reggie reaches in his pocket and retrieves a packet of Caribbean tobacco.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Would you like some?

MANWARING

I will 'ave a bit if you don't mind, sir.

Reggie hands his driver the packet and he proceeds to stuff his ivory pipe and light it.

REGGIE

I'll be busy most of the week so I appreciate your attention to detail, especially your persistent punctuality. It allows me to make the most of my day.

MANWARING

It is quite all right sir.

REGGIE

I remember when I was a young lad, my grandfather would tell me stories about India from his military experiences here. I thought the stories were fascinating, but never really understood the import of them.

Manwaring doesn't respond but rather smiles at Reggie and takes a long puff of his pipe.

EXT. THE MERCHANT TRADERS OF LONDON (WHITEHALL) - DAY

The compound is comprised of a large white stucco building surrounded by a large stone perimeter. A fairly large sign depicts the name with a noticeable addition. Reggie named his office WHITEHALL and it appears at the bottom of the sign.

As the carriage approaches the compound, Reggie can immediately see the muddy conditions of the courtyard caused by workers hosing themselves down with large hoses from two fire wagons positioned on either side of the office. Reggie notices two young men engaged in a fist fight and dismounts promptly to end it. Slipping several times in the mud, he approaches them.

REGGIE

Enough!

Reggie pulls them apart and they run out of the compound.

Reggie glances over at the front door of the office and sees his secretary standing in the doorway nodding her head in disgust. He walks over to the front door and walks right past her.

INT. REGGIE FITZSIMMONS' OFFICE - DAY

Reggie walks in his office immediately followed by his secretary, FRANÇOISE HILLIARD. He turns around to address her.

REGGIE

I think we need to teach these workers some manners.

FRANÇOISE

If you think water can be turned into wine; then perhaps that will happen.

Reggie smiles. He marvels at her raspy voice in her distinct French accent. For a middle-aged woman; she is extremely attractive with her blond hair pulled back in a ponytail.

FRANÇOISE (CONT'D)

Have you looked at your shoes? They're a mess.

REGGIE

I'm well aware, thank you. I must find a way to punish these criminals. Who told them they could use the fire hoses anyway?

FRANÇOISE

I believe it's their way of taking a bath.

Reggie frowns and picks up a binder on his desk and opens it.

REGGIE

When is this meeting with Mr. Bryson?

FRANÇOISE

He is scheduled to arrive tomorrow morning.

Before he can respond, his secretary disappears. He reviews the data in the binder. Moments later, Françoise enters the room with tea and buttered toast and puts the tray on a side table adjacent to Reggie's desk.

FRANÇOISE (CONT'D)

I must make it perfectly clear that Roger Bryson is a man to be reckoned with because he was fairly high up in the management of the East India Company.

REGGIE

I was afraid of that.

Françoise sips her tea and takes a bite of her toast. She clears her throat.

FRANÇOISE

All indications are he is laying the groundwork for the visit of Nigel Mancroft, the head of the company. Bryson will want to assert his powers of persuasion.

REGGIE

What for?

FRANÇOISE

I assume to ensure you understand the company's social ladder.

REGGIE

He needn't bother. I already understand it.

Reggie sits back and sips his tea.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

I know business has been extremely slow, but it's only been six months. We are an independent company. They must understand that.

FRANÇOISE

My experience with the East India Company can only be described as not pleasant in any way. They expect results immediately.

REGGIE

I will convince them otherwise.

Françoise collects the tea cups and left-over toast and departs with a slight smile.

INT. REGGIE FITZSIMMONS' OFFICE - DAY

The next morning, Reggie, looking pale, is standing at the front window waiting for Bryson to arrive. Françoise enters the office with her usual grace.

FRANÇOISE

Anticipating the worst this morning, are we?

REGGIE

Of course not. Where is Mountcaster?

FRANÇOISE
He's at the warehouse. Why?

Reggie appears extremely anxious.

REGGIE
If Bryson wants to visit the
warehouse, the foreman must be
there.

Françoise stands next to him and puts her hand on his
shoulder.

FRANÇOISE
Are you not prepared?

Reggie glances at his secretary and takes a deep breath. He
notices a carriage entering the courtyard. ROGER BRYSON
emerges, slipping and sliding as heads for the front door.
Françoise goes to let him in.

Moments later, she brings Bryson, who is stocky with
weathered face, into his office. Reggie goes over to shake
hands. Bryson then looks down at his shoes.

BRYSON
I must say, you certainly have a
mess on your hands out front. Mud
everywhere.

Reggie, although appearing somewhat embarrassed, motions for
them to take a seat.

REGGIE
I understand you are here to give
advice and counsel for Mr.
Mancroft's visit.

BRYSON
Even though your company is
independent, it is subjected to the
same bylaws. The East India Company
pays an agreed upon amount into the
National Exchequer on an annual
basis.

REGGIE
I was under the impression that I
would be exempt the first year.

BRYSON

I believe it was stated that your rent would be greatly reduced the first year, not the tax responsibility. You must understand the consequences of not supplementing the Crown.

Françoise politely interrupts and places a tray of tea and scones on a small side table next to Mr. Bryson.

FRANÇOISE

Anything else, sir?

REGGIE

No, thank you.

Reggie pours a cup of tea and motions for his guest to do the same.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

I would never suggest slighting the Crown. But we have just begun and need time to get our feet on the ground.

Bryson pours a cup of tea and takes a sip.

BRYSON

I must say it does not fall to my discretion to make the rules. You will naturally have to discuss this with Mr. Mancroft.

REGGIE

I intend to.

BRYSON

The East India Company expects a lot out of you.

REGGIE

I'm working hard to make this venture a success. I certainly know what I'm doing. It just takes time.

BRYSON

Do you have a business plan I can review?

REGGIE

I'm afraid not.

BRYSON
 Make no mistake; Mister Mancroft
 will want to see one.

Bryson pulls a letter out of his suit coat and hands it to Reggie.

BRYSON (CONT'D)
 A welcome letter from Mancroft. He
 is anxious to meet you.

REGGIE
 When should I expect him?

BRYSON
 I have no idea.

Bryson stands and shakes Reggie's hand and walks to the office door. He again looks down at his shoes.

BRYSON (CONT'D)
 (sarcastic smile)
 I would ensure the mud disappears
 before Mancroft arrives.

Françoise escorts him out to the courtyard. She comes back. Reggie is looking out the window.

REGGIE
 I must have been naïve to think I
 wouldn't have to put up with
 bureaucrats like that.

FRANÇOISE
 They're all the same. Think they
 speak for the Queen or even the God
 Almighty sometimes. I give you
 credit for taking them on. Lord
 knows, someone has to.

Reggie glances over at Françoise and just shakes his head.

INT. FITZSIMMOINS RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Reggie sits on the veranda with MARY, his wife, and they discuss experiences so far. They can see lights of Delhi in the distance.

REGGIE
 I met Roger Bryson this morning.

MARY
 What's he like?

REGGIE

A typical bureaucrat. He tried to intimidate me because he thinks we aren't moving fast enough to please Nigel Mancroft.

MARY

I wouldn't worry about him.

REGGIE

What do you mean?

MARY

It's my father you need to please.

REGGIE

I beg your pardon.

MARY

He made it clear to Mancroft you would guarantee the success of this business. You must ensure that happens.

REGGIE

(smirks)

You know my reputation; my qualifications.

Reggie sits back in his chair and stares at Mary.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

I'm in the process of writing a business plan. Françoise is helping me.

MARY

She's a secretary for Christ's sake.

REGGIE

She's dealt with the East India Company for many years. She knows what she's doing.

MARY

I agreed to come to this country to make a life for us. Our company must thrive and you will make it so.

REGGIE

(slight grin)

You have my word.

Mary tries to smile as she goes into the living area; leaving Reggie to himself. He stares into the darkness of the night.

INT. REGGIE FITZSIMMONS' OFFICE - DAY

In the early morning, Reggie is reading a written note from Françoise when she walks in.

REGGIE

Who is this person and what are we hiring him for?

FRANÇOISE

We need another foreman to run the warehouse.

REGGIE

What's wrong with Mountcaster?

FRANÇOISE

Nothing. He just needs help.

REGGIE

What do you know about this person?

FRANÇOISE

Only that he is perhaps your age or somewhat younger and is studying to be a doctor.

REGGIE

When is he coming?

FRANÇOISE

Sometime this morning.

She smiles, hands him a piece of paper, and leaves the office and shuts the door behind her.

Reggie glances at the piece of paper, and throws it in a drawer. He picks up several binders and places them directly in front of him. Just as starts to read through them, he hears a knock at the door and can tell by the loud sound it is Devlin Mountcaster.

MOUNTCASTER (O.S.)

It's Mountcaster. Can I come in?

REGGIE

Please do.

Mountcaster, currently a major in the 9th Lancers, enters and abruptly takes a seat.

He is dressed in the traditional uniform: tight black trousers, red swallow-tail coat, and holding his Prussian-looking helmet under his left arm. He politely places the helmet on Reggie's desk.

MOUNTCASTER

I understand you wanted to see me, old chap.

REGGIE

I want to know the status of the warehouse.

Reggie looks his foreman over.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Why are you wearing your uniform? I thought you were working at the warehouse today.

MOUNTCASTER

I have an affair at the regiment this morning. I shouldn't be long. I will say this though; we desperately need more workers.

REGGIE

It's hard to find locals who want to do this kind of work.

MOUNTCASTER

Perhaps soliciting workers from London would help.

Mountcaster sits up straight as if at attention with a scowl on his face.

MOUNTCASTER (CONT'D)

Honestly, Reggie, you might as well dig a hole and crawl in it than to hire the locals. I question their loyalty.

REGGIE

What about the sepoys? Many are soldiers and the best I can tell are committed to our cause.

MOUNTCASTER

I wouldn't turn your back, old chap.

REGGIE

What is your proposal to solve our problems?

MOUNTCASTER

I don't have one.

Reggie seems upset, but tries not to let it boil over.

REGGIE

At any rate, Mary and I request your presence for dinner tomorrow night if that is amenable.

MOUNTCASTER

It would be an honor.

Mountcaster stands and departs. Françoise enters immediately.

FRANÇOISE

Sir, Mr. Qureshi is here to see you.

REGGIE

Who?

FRANÇOISE

The interviewee.

REGGIE

Please bring him in.

Françoise escorts NEVI QURESHI into the office. She smiles and departs. He takes a seat. Skinny and rather short, he is clean shaven and well dressed. His dark black hair is long, but neatly parted in the middle and combed straight back.

Reggie opens the drawer and reviews the piece of paper his secretary provided him.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

I understand you are studying to be a doctor.

QURESHI

Yes, in Bombay, but had to drop out because of lack of money for tuition. I'm willing to do anything you have to offer.

REGGIE

I need someone to help manage our warehouse. Will it affect your studies?

(MORE)

REGGIE (CONT'D)

I assume you don't want to fall
behind if you get back in school.

QURESHI

I will be fine.

REGGIE

I see you have experience working
for the East India Company.

QURESHI

I worked in their warehouse in
Bombay.

REGGIE

Very well then, I would like you to
begin in two days. Is that a
problem?

QURESHI

No sir.

Reggie stands and shakes Qureshi's hand. He walks him to the door where Françoise greets him and escorts him out.

INT. FITZSIMMONS RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Mary joins Reggie in the dining room while he's rearranging objects on the sideboard. He then goes over and slightly rearranges the place setting.

MARY

Where is our company? The dinner is
practically ready.

REGGIE

They will be here soon.

Mary storms off.

Reggie hears a knock at the door. He escorts his visitors into the dining room. Mountcaster's wife, ALICE, enormously attractive, is wearing a low-cut gown while he is dressed in his military attire. He carefully places his helmet on the sideboard; making sure not to disturb anything. Mary enters.

MARY

Dinner is ready to be served.

Servant girls bring in the food and place the dishes on the table and depart. They all take a seat.

REGGIE

How did the Mountcasters enjoy
their time in Burma?

MOUNTCASTER

We were there for three years while
I was a Deputy Regimental
Commander. It was quite an
experience.

ALICE

I dare say; my husband would
certainly want you to think all was
a bed of roses, but I can tell you
it was not. The monsoons in
southern Burma in the summer are
vicious.

MOUNTCASTER

(smiles)

I believe what you mean to say is
you didn't like the snakes.

That solicited a few laughs at Alice's expense.

MARY

No one in their right mind likes
snakes.

Reggie glances at Mary and smiles. He takes a sip of wine
before he addresses Mountcaster.

REGGIE

I understand there were a number of
brutal skirmishes in Burma between
the East India Company and the
Burmese. Over what?

MOUNTCASTER

Teak, old chap. The company wants
to gain access to the teak forests
in southern Burma so they can
export the precious wood.

REGGIE

It's valuable. I'll give you that.
By the way, I hired a new worker
yesterday.

MOUNTCASTER

Who?

REGGIE

A young Indian lad who is studying to be a doctor. He will help you manage the warehouse.

MOUNTCASTER

He's not a sepoy, is he? He could be trouble. Besides, I can manage the place myself.

REGGIE

Let me worry about it.

INT. FITZSIMMONS RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Later in the evening, Reggie and Mountcaster sit in the veranda smoking cigars. Mary and Alice relax.

MOUNTCASTER

You know, old chap, you might consider joining the regiment here in Delhi. I need someone like you to get the troops in line.

REGGIE

I have no military experience.

MOUNTCASTER

I need someone to give orders. I can teach you what you need to know.

REGGIE

I'm not qualified to be an officer.

MOUNTCASTER

I see you as a sergeant supporting me directly.

Mary gets out of her chair and walks over to Mountcaster.

MARY

I don't approve. I know military duties will divert Reggie's attention from running the business we came to India to establish.

MOUNTCASTER

Your concerns are reasonable, but you don't give your husband enough credit.

REGGIE

It is a way to make extra money to supplement our income.

MARY

I don't think you're cut out for some sort of military duty. After all, you are a businessman.

REGGIE

That goes without saying.

Reggie takes a puff of his cigar and blows the smoke high in the air.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

I will, by all means, consider it.

The room becomes completely silent.

INT. REGGIE FITZSIMMONS' OFFICE - DAY

The next morning, Reggie is looking out his front window when he sees a carriage arrive. He watches as his wife and a man of the cloth exit the carriage and come into the building. Moments later, Françoise brings them into his office.

MARY

Honestly, Reggie. That mud out front is an eyesore. And that walkway; the most unstable thing I've ever been on.

REGGIE

It will have to do for the moment. And who might I have the pleasure of meeting?

The Reverend, FATHER O'BRIEN, steps forward with an extended hand.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Father Séamus O'Brien. It is a pleasure to meet you.

REGGIE

Likewise.

MARY

Father O'Brien wanted to meet you.
I think we should start going to
the church in Delhi now that the
Father is here. He's trying to
teach the gospel to the natives.

Reggie grins and they all take a seat.

FATHER O'BRIEN

I want simply to teach them about
God, the Bible, and the love of
Jesus Christ.

MARY

I don't know for the life of me why
these people can worship anyone
other than Jesus Christ. It's
simply heathen not to.

FATHER O'BRIEN

They simply don't know any better.

REGGIE

What if they reject you and your
God?

Mary abruptly sits up straight.

MARY

Reginald Fitzsimmons, how dare you.

Father O'Brien waves her off.

FATHER O'BRIEN

I'm not offended.

MARY

You shouldn't have to explain
yourself. Thank God for you and the
others. Someone has to teach these
people about religion.

Reggie sits back and fills his pipe and lights it.

REGGIE

Who are we to teach them about
religion? They won't accept it and
in the end they will resent us.

MARY

One can always trust in the Lord.

REGGIE

They believe in their own god or gods. Why is it so necessary to convert them to ours?

MARY

Belief in a righteous gospel. Plain and simple.

Before they can continue, Françoise rushes into the office.

FRANÇOISE

Excuse the interruption, but someone said the warehouse is on fire. Quick, we must go.

Reggie abruptly stands and motions for his secretary to follow him. They go out the back door.

EXT. WAREHOUSE COMPOUND - DAY

They arrive in a carriage. Flames shoot up high in the air from the warehouse. They disembark from the carriage far enough away to protect the horses. They can see employees intently engaged in putting out the fire. Reggie spots his foreman and gets his attention.

REGGIE

How did this happen?

MOUNTCASTER

I'm not sure.

Mountcaster points to three covered corpses lying on the ground.

MOUNTCASTER (CONT'D)

The best I can tell; everyone one else got out of the building.

REGGIE

Where's Qureshi?

MOUNTCASTER

I haven't seen him all day.

REGGIE

He was supposed to be here.

MOUNTCASTER

I tell you, old chap, I haven't seen him.

As Mountcaster begins to walk away, Qureshi appears out of nowhere.

MOUNTCASTER (CONT'D)
Where have you been?

QURESHI
How did this happen?

MOUNTCASTER
I asked you a question.

QURESHI
My mother was sick and I had to
take care of her.

Françoise puts her arm around Qureshi.

FRANÇOISE
Perhaps it was best you weren't
here.

Reggie ignores his secretary's comments. The scowl on his face says it all.

REGGIE
I want a full account of the dead.
I also want to know the extent of
damages to the merchandise.

Reggie motions for Françoise to get in the carriage and they depart.

INT. REGGIE FITZSIMMONS' OFFICE - DAY

Two days later in the morning, Reggie is reviewing merchandizing paperwork and visibly upset when Françoise comes into the office.

FRANÇOISE
You must stop agonizing over the
fire. It wasn't your fault.

REGGIE
The financial loss is one thing,
but I can't dismiss the dead. I'm
afraid it will cause ill will among
the citizens of Delhi.

FRANÇOISE
It was an accident. You mustn't
feel that way.

REGGIE

In my experience, fire just doesn't start by itself.

They can hear commotion in the courtyard. Reggie goes over and looks out the window. He sees Bryson getting of the carriage and walking to the front door.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

It's Bryson.

Françoise immediately goes to greet him. Moments later, she brings him in the office.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

I was expecting Mancroft.

BRYSON

His visit has been delayed. I shouldn't be long.

Reggie pulls out a small binder from his desk drawer. He takes out a piece of paper and hands it to Bryson.

REGGIE

I have a plan for him to review, but not a complete inventory.

BRYSON

You must do better than this, Mr. Fitzsimmons. Does this inventory account for the fire?

REGGIE

News seems to travel fast.

BRYSON

You simply cannot sweep a major fire under the carpet so to speak.

REGGIE

(frowns)

That wasn't my intention.

BRYSON

I understand there were deaths.

REGGIE

Yes and the families were notified.

BRYSON

Do you know how the fire was started?

REGGIE

Not yet, but Mister Mountcaster is investigating.

Bryson looks at the paperwork with a disgusting grimace.

BRYSON

You cannot possibly expect me to show this to Mancroft.

REGGIE

It's concise but there's nothing wrong with it.

BRYSON

I most certainly disagree.

REGGIE

(frustrated)

Why must I be made to give you my business plan anyway? I'm an independent business and should be allowed to operate as one.

BRYSON

You are quite out of line, Mr. Fitzsimmons. You are only here because your father-in-law assured us of your cooperation.

Françoise abruptly interrupts.

FRANÇOISE

Sir, Mr. Mountcaster needs to see you. He says it's important.

REGGIE

We are concluding. I will see him in a moment.

Françoise smiles and walks out of the room.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Is there anything else?

BRYSON

You have no other choice but to comply with our wishes. It's certainly possible for you to pack up and go back to England if that's what you want.

REGGIE

I will stand my ground.

BRYSON
So be it. I will pass this on to
Mancroft.

Bryson stands and departs without saying another word. Reggie watches as Bryson gets into his carriage and leaves the compound.

Françoise enters the office.

FRANÇOISE
Mountcaster is here to see you.

Reggie waves his hand to signal for Françoise to bring him in.

MOUNTCASTER
Bryson is a thorn in our side.

REGGIE
Yes. Is there a problem?

Mountcaster, dressed in civilian attire, takes a seat.

MOUNTCASTER
I think I know who started the
fire.

REGGIE
Who?

MOUNTCASTER
Several workers said Qureshi was at
the warehouse in the early morning
and then disappeared.

REGGIE
But he said he was taking care of
his sick mother. Did he not?

Reggie sits back as if in thought.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
What would he have to gain by this
heinous act?

MOUNTCASTER
I don't know. But I'm going to find
out.

EXT. GARDEN NEAR SERVANT QUARTERS - DAY

In the late afternoon after work, Reggie takes a walk around the grounds of his home to clear his head. He notices a servant girl sitting on a stone wall overlooking a beautiful bed of flowers. He walks over to see her. Her name is MANJU.

REGGIE

I believe we haven't met.

Reggie shakes her hand and she appears embarrassed.

MANJU

My name is Manju.

REGGIE

That's a beautiful name. Are you from Delhi?

MANJU

Yes.

REGGIE

Do you enjoy your work?

MANJU

My parents were servants so I guess I don't know any better.

Reggie looks at her with a sense of awe.

REGGIE

You speak English very well.

MANJU

Thank you, but it has taken a while.

REGGIE

Do you live in the servant quarters?

MANJU

I'm the only one.

REGGIE

Why?

MANJU

I cannot afford to stay in the city, and I have nowhere else to go. My parents moved away.

REGGIE

Sorry to hear that. I want you to know, my wife and I think you and the others are doing a splendid job around here.

MANJU

Thank you, sir.

Reggie casually looks around the area.

REGGIE

(smiles)

I must go back to the house. Nice meeting you.

Reggie walks away while Manju remains sitting on the wall.

INT. FITZSIMMOINS RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - DAY

Reggie enters the bedroom where Mary is lying in bed, sick and miserable.

MARY

Where have you been?

REGGIE

Out for a walk.

MARY

And whom have you been talking to?

Reggie hesitates, as he paces the floor.

REGGIE

I was talking to one of the servant girls.

MARY

You know that's forbidden.

Mary raises straight up out of bed.

MARY (CONT'D)

How dare you.

REGGIE

It was harmless.

MARY

She's the help, for God's sake, and should remain in her place.

Reggie walks over to a night stand and picks up a small silver pouch.

REGGIE

You're always in bed. What is it this time?

MARY

I don't know what you're talking about.

Reggie opens the pouch and smells the contents.

REGGIE

This is Opium.

MARY

It makes me feel better.

REGGIE

Nonsense!

Reggie, pouch in hand, storms out of the bedroom. Mary collapses on the bed.

INT. REGGIE FITZSIMMONS' OFFICE - DAY

A week later, Reggie sits at his desk reading biographical information about the 9th Lancers. He does so in anticipation of a visit from the commander, Colonel GORDON MACCREEDY. He fidgets in his chair somewhat as he reads through the material.

Françoise interrupts his concentration.

FRANÇOISE

Sir, the colonel is here to see you.

REGGIE

Show him in.

Reggie stands and waits. The colonel, escorted by Mountcaster, enters the office with a sense of confidence. MacCreedy's demeanor is one of a seasoned military man: six foot four, bushy mustache, stern face, and short hair combed straight back.

MOUNTCASTER

Reggie, I want you to meet Colonel Gordon MacCreedy.

REGGIE

A pleasure, I must say.

They shake hands and Reggie motions for them to take a seat.

MACCREEDY

I understand you might be interested in joining our fine regiment of soldiers.

REGGIE

I really haven't thought about it lately, but I must admit it does sound intriguing.

MOUNTCASTER

You would certainly benefit from it. And so would we.

MACCREEDY

The 9th Lancers have defeated the Punjab in bloody skirmishes, and kept the peace in Delhi through very difficult times. I, myself, have been in India for fifteen years and before that in Burma.

REGGIE

(laughs)

You must like hot temperatures.

MACCREEDY

I don't know about that, but I like the freedom I have here. It suits me well.

MOUNTCASTER

It's all in the mind, old chap.

REGGIE

I can't for the life of me understand why someone would stay in this country indefinitely. That's not my intention, I'll tell you that.

MACCREEDY

It takes time to build a business.

REGGIE

I will let time decide.

MacCreedy stands and goes over to the window, looks out and walks over to Reggie.

MACCREEDY

Let me be clear, Mr. Fitzsimmons. I think you have what it takes to assume a role as a sergeant in the forces. Now, what do you think?

REGGIE

I'm not sure.

MOUNTCASTER

You can make a few extra quid if you know what I mean.

Mountcaster stands and paces around the room.

MOUNTCASTER (CONT'D)

What are you waiting for, man? This is an opportunity you can't ignore.

REGGIE

I need some time to think it over. I trust that is agreeable.

Françoise stands at the door.

FRANÇOISE

Sir, I just received a telegram from Mr. Bryson saying Mr. Mancroft will be here in a few days.

REGGIE

May I see the telegram?

Françoise walks over and hands it to Reggie. MacCreedy smiles at her.

MACCREEDY

How have you been?

FRANÇOISE

Fine and you?

MACCREEDY

None too worse for the wear.

MacCreedy looks over at Reggie.

MACCREEDY (CONT'D)

I had the pleasure of serving with Colonel Hilliard in Burma. He was a distinguished officer and a good man. His death was untimely.

Reggie lowers and nods his head. He looks at his secretary.

REGGIE
I know you miss him.

Reggie hesitates for a moment; glancing at the telegram.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
I would like to know when Mancroft
is coming.

FRANÇOISE
I will try to find out.

MACCREEDY
Who is this Mancroft fellow?

MOUNTCASTER
(glances at Reggie)
A thorn in our side.

Reggie shakes his head and looks askance at Mountcaster.

REGGIE
He's nothing to worry about.

Colonel MacCreedy walks toward the door.

MACCREEDY
I trust you will consider our
offer.

Mountcaster escorts the colonel out, as he smiles at
Françoise.

INT. REGGIE FITZSIMMONS' OFFICE - DAY

That afternoon, Reggie hovers over his desk reading a report
that garners his attention. It solicits more questions than
answers. He goes and peeks around his door; seeing Françoise
standing at the mirror in the hallway, combing her hair.

REGGIE
Sorry to interrupt. Do you have a
moment?

Feeling somewhat embarrassed, she goes in the office.

FRANÇOISE
Yes, sir.

REGGIE

I'm highly concerned about the report I received from Mountcaster regarding merchandise lost in the fire.

FRANÇOISE

It is quite discouraging, but certainly not the end of the world. The exports can be replaced by the local merchants at a sensible price.

REGGIE

Do you think that's reasonable?

FRANÇOISE

I'm positive we will never know unless we try.

REGGIE

I didn't think it would be this difficult.

Françoise stands by his side while he thumbs through the report and places her hand on his shoulder.

FRANÇOISE

We will make this right, sir.

Appearing suddenly, Mary is standing in the doorway.

MARY

Excuse me. I must talk with you alone.

Françoise departs as Mary enters.

REGGIE

What is it?

MARY

I understand there is discord in the city over what happened here. I would say the significant loss of supplies could place our business in ruins.

REGGIE

It is not your place to criticize, but rather to support my efforts.

MARY

I have every stake in this endeavor. After all, my father expects me to look after the business.

REGGIE

Must I remind you that I am the proprietor and you are the wife?

MARY

I didn't come here to be insulted.

Mary leaves the office in a huff.

INT. FITZSIMMONS RESIDENCE - VERANDA - DAY

Several weeks later in the late afternoon, the Fitzsimmons hosts the Mountcasters for Afternoon Tea. A servant girl places a tray of tea and a tray with walnut bread, butter, and a ham and leak quiche on a large table in the corner of the room. Mary invited Father O'Brien.

REGGIE

I understand your congregation is not what you thought it would be.

Father O'Brien sits a little straighter in his chair.

FATHER O'BRIEN

It is as I suspected. The natives, for the most part, are unwilling to listen to reason.

MOUNTCASTER

Of course they're not. They already have a religion.

ALICE

I dare say these natives are heathens, but it is none of our business to interfere.

MARY

They must be shown the light.

FATHER O'BRIEN

My brethren and I are under decree by the Crown to convert the masses.

MOUNTCASTER

Isn't that rather dangerous?

FATHER O'BRIEN
I don't believe so or I wouldn't be
here.

Manju enters the veranda unexpectedly.

MANJU
Sir, a visitor is here.

REGGIE
Who?

MANJU
He said his name is Mancroft.

They all look at each other in disbelief.

MOUNTCASTER
Send him in, girl. Now!

A moment later, Manju brings in Mancroft. He appears to be sweating a lot and is wiping his brow with a large handkerchief.

MANCROFT
I must say, it has been a trial and
tribulation getting here.

REGGIE
We were expecting you at the
office.

MANCROFT
Naturally, but I thought it would
be better to talk to you here.

Reggie pulls up a chair for Mancroft.

REGGIE
I'm truly sorry for the fire, the
loss of life, and merchandise. I
intend to make amends.

MANCROFT
Trade is not an easy affair. I can
tell you that!

REGGIE
I'm having a bit of a hard time
getting started nurturing my
business, but I feel confident I
can succeed.

MANCROFT

The East India Company is losing money as soon as they make it. I had hoped that your endeavor would help make things better.

REGGIE

I can't be expected to be the savior of the East India Company. Be reasonable.

MOUNTCASTER

I believe sepoy's are robbing us blind and undermining our authority on all fronts.

MANCROFT

There's always potential for that.

Reggie sits back in his chair.

REGGIE

Please explain why Mr. Bryson feels like he needs to visit constantly.

MANCROFT

He's my eyes and ears so to speak. He only wants to place his ducks neatly in a row. That's what.

MOUNTCASTER

He's very good at that, but we certainly know what we're doing.

Mancroft looks askance at Mountcaster.

MANCROFT

Do you have a business plan, Mr. Fitzsimmons?

REGGIE

It's at the office. My secretary is not here so I'm reluctant to discuss it.

MANCROFT

Does she run the business?

REGGIE

Of course not, I only mean to say she's not here to retrieve it.

MANCROFT

Very well, Mr. Fitzsimmons, I want to see it and will send Bryson around to collect it.

REGGIE

I understand.

With that; Mancroft stands and glances around the room, as he wipes his brow.

MANCROFT

It has been a pleasure.

He leaves the room as everyone seems to be in shock.

INT. REGGIE FITZSIMMONS' OFFICE - DAY

Reggie is sipping tea and contemplating life when he hears the front door open and slam shut. Moments later an OLD WORKER, a local, is holding Qureshi by the arm and enters the office. Françoise follows them in with a box of medical supplies.

REGGIE

What happened?

OLD WORKER

There was a fight. Nevi took the brunt of it. I didn't know what to do.

QURESHI

I didn't like what they were saying, sir.

REGGIE

And what might that be?

Françoise attempts to treat Qureshi's wounds: a bloody nose and an abrasion on his face.

QURESHI

They said I started the fire in the warehouse and I was no good and didn't consider myself a sepoy.

REGGIE

You mustn't listen to them. They're trying to provoke a fight.

QURESHI

It's not that easy, sir. They never leave me alone.

FRANÇOISE

I think they're jealous, that's all. If they had just half your energy and intelligence, it would be miraculous.

REGGIE

I want you to take a few days for yourself. Meanwhile, I will decide what the proper course of action should be.

QURESHI

Thank you, sir.

Françoise escorts them out.

INT. FITZSIMMONS RESIDENCE - VERANDA - NIGHT

That evening, Reggie is sitting on the veranda staring at the lights of Delhi at dusk. Mary enters pretentiously and sits next to her husband.

MARY

Have you written a sensible business plan? We are in serious trouble.

REGGIE

We must give it time.

MARY

Our expenses more than exceed our profits. What are you going to do about it?

REGGIE

I'm not sure. But I'm positive of one thing. Your constant badgering certainly doesn't help.

Mary leans forward.

MARY

Where would you be if it weren't for me? I ask you that!

REGGIE

What are you trying to say?

MARY

My father is the one who set you up
for this endeavor.

REGGIE

I understand, but you shouldn't be
involved.

Reggie hesitates; trying to contain his fervor.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

I'm convinced now is the time to
join the British Army.

MARY

(incensed)

Are you out of your mind? I won't
have it.

REGGIE

I believe we need the extra money.

MARY

We wouldn't if you knew how to run
a business.

Reggie doesn't respond, but rather looks away.

MARY (CONT'D)

I want my silver pouch back. Where
is it?

Reggie stays silent.

MARY (CONT'D)

I need it. I feel sick. I'm going
to bed. Alone!

Mary rushes out of the veranda. Reggie remains looking at the
lights of Delhi.

EXT. FITZSIMMONS RESIDENCE - NIGHT

After sparing with his wife, Reggie takes a walk around his
estate. He sees a light on in the bungalow where Manju is
staying. He begins to walk toward it, but decides to turn and
go back to his house.

As he starts to return to the house, he hears a voice. He
turns around and sees Manju standing in her doorway.

MANJU

Can I talk to you, sir?

REGGIE

Of course.

He walks toward her bungalow and she motions for him to come in.

INT. MANJU'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Her living quarters is small with just enough room for a bed, two chairs, a sideboard that holds eating utensils, and a tiny bathroom and pantry in the rear.

He sits on a small bamboo chair while she sits on the bed; dressed in a long silk nightgown. Reggie appears somewhat nervous. He realizes he probably shouldn't be there.

MANJU

I just don't have anyone to talk to. It's been hard since I started working here.

REGGIE

I'm sorry to hear that.

MANJU

What do you do all day?

REGGIE

What do you mean?

MANJU

In your business.

REGGIE

We sell and buy merchandize.

MANJU

It sounds very interesting. Would you like some tea?

Reggie glances around the room.

REGGIE

No thank you. I wager you work much harder than me.

MANJU

I wouldn't presume to say that.

REGGIE

You do have quite a bit to do around the house.

MANJU
It's my job, sir.

REGGIE
You do it well.

Reggie stares at Manju; feeling vulnerable.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
You're a beautiful woman.

Manju blushes.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
You can call me Reggie if you like.

MANJU
Certainly not in front of your
friends.

REGGIE
Yes.

Manju looks at a small clock on the sideboard.

MANJU
It's late. You must get back home
to your wife.

She stands. He wants her more than anything else in the world. He moves closer. Their bodies meet. He kisses her and they gradually fall back on the small crumpled bed.

EXT. 9TH LANCERS TRAINING GROUNDS - DAY

On a bright and extremely hot Thursday morning in October, Reggie, dressed in business attire, arrives at a large training area with his driver. It is close to the parade grounds in area south of Ambala.

They slowly approach several buildings.

MANWARING
Being a member of the British Army
is a noble calling. You should be
proud to consider it.

REGGIE
I haven't made up my mind.

MANWARING
You will in due time, sir. Just
give it some more thought.
(MORE)

MANWARING (CONT'D)

Your leadership is something the
forces sorely need.

They can now hear gunshots and see smoke rising into the air. Red-clad soldiers are charging around everywhere. Reggie slowly vacates the carriage.

MANWARING (CONT'D)

I will pick you up here, sir.

He departs and leaves Reggie looking around the area. Colonel MacCreedy rides up on a black stallion and dismounts; slowly walking over to Reggie.

MACCREEDY

Nice that you could make it,
Fitzsimmons. Let me show you
around.

Before he can answer, Reggie feels a hand on his shoulder. Devlin Mountcaster smiles.

MOUNTCASTER

I wondered if you would actually
show up.

REGGIE

I had some reservations, but I
wanted to see for myself what you
chaps really do out here.

MACCREEDY

Are you ready to make a commitment?

REGGIE

I honestly don't know.

MacCreedy motions for them to go into one of the large buildings behind them.

INT. 9TH LANCERS HEADQUARTERS OFFICE - DAY

They all sit around a large oak conference table sitting in the middle of the room. Mountcaster brings a tray of tea over and sets it on the table.

MACCREEDY

This is where we plan for any
contingency. We have one of the
best trained regiments in northern
India.

REGGIE

(smiles)

Do you think the horde from Burma
will attack?

Mountcaster squints and raises an eyebrow.

MOUNTCASTER

One never knows, old chap. I
suspect even today we could be in
the bore sight of their rifles.

Mountcaster takes Reggie over to a small parchment area map
on the wall that depicts the training grounds, which is
massive and stretches 15 by 20 miles.

MOUNTCASTER (CONT'D)

We have ample room in which to
practice maneuvers and drills.

REGGIE

Do you routinely use most of this
area to run these drills?

MACCREEDY

Afraid not, Fitzsimmons, not
suitable for all that.

REGGIE

How often do you train?

MACCREEDY

As often as we need to.

Reggie fills his cup with tea and takes a sip.

REGGIE

When can I see the rest of the
complex?

MOUNTCASTER

Soon enough, old chap. I want you
to be thinking how you could help
us out.

Reggie takes another sip of his tea and gives Mountcaster
somewhat of a sarcastic smile.

REGGIE

How many British soldiers are in
Ambala?

MACCREEDY

Close to 5000. Only 50 are officers. At least 30 are non-commissioned officers and the rest soldiers. But there are several squadrons of sepoy.

REGGIE

Are the sepoy good soldiers?

MOUNTCASTER

It's difficult trying to train these ignorant dark skins. If you ask me, they're useless.

MACCREEDY

(clears his throat)

I want to show you the regiment at its very best.

Reggie follows Mountcaster and MacCreedy out the door.

EXT. 9TH LANCERS TRAINING AREA - DAY

They approach a large training area, only one of many, and Reggie observes what he sees: men shooting at targets a distance away.

REGGIE

Do you train year-round?

MACCREEDY

Of course, can't let these lads get lackadaisical, now can we?

MOUNTCASTER

Don't want to leave them to their own devices.

As they turn a corner they see a group of men standing around in a circle. MacCreedy parts the men to see one of his lieutenants flogging a young sepoy soldier with a cat-o'-nine-tails. It appears brutal. The young man's back is covered in blood and he's crying out in pain. The YOUNG LIEUTENANT faces his commander.

MACCREEDY

What is the charge?

YOUNG LIEUTENANT

Sir, this man was caught stealing rations and money from one of his fellow soldiers.

MACCREEDY

Do you have proof?

YOUNG LIEUTENANT

He admitted it himself.

MacCreedy looks around at the soldiers before he responds.

MACCREEDY

Continue.

MacCreedy motions for Mountcaster and Reggie to walk away.

REGGIE

Isn't that a bit excessive? I question the logic behind it.

MACCREEDY

It's a necessary evil.

REGGIE

But at what cost?

MOUNTCASTER

I'm truly sorry it makes you queasy. These soldiers must be kept in line; especially the sepoy's who are nothing more than mindless toe-rags.

REGGIE

I'll have to think this over.

MOUNTCASTER

Not to worry, old chap. We can make decisions for you, if that's what's bothering you.

MACCREEDY

It appears you need the extra quid, so I suggest you do the right thing.

Reggie doesn't respond. They continue wading down a small path in the training area.

INT. FITZSIMMONS RESIDENCE - VERANDA - NIGHT

That evening, Reggie enters the veranda. Mary is already there and not very happy.

MARY

Where were you today? I went to the office and your secretary said you had an important engagement.

REGGIE

Her name is Françoise, and I went to visit the Lancers at their training grounds.

MARY

Why on earth would you do that?

REGGIE

To get an idea of what they do there.

MARY

Do you expect me to believe you just carelessly allowed your secretary to run the business?

REGGIE

She's more than capable.

MARY

Father would be incensed.

REGGIE

There's no need for him to know. Besides, I believe we are starting to taste success.

MARY

You have no idea what you're talking about.

Mary starts to get up but abruptly sits again.

MARY (CONT'D)

I want to have a Christmas party.

REGGIE

At the office.

MARY

No, of course not. Here at our house.

REGGIE

I think it would be better at the office.

MARY

I want to have it here. That is the end of it.

Reggie smirks a bit before he talks.

REGGIE

I talked to a doctor the other day.

MARY

What for?

REGGIE

You need to stop relying on Opium.

MARY

How I treat my illness is my business.

Reggie stares at Mary and just shakes his head. She goes into the house without saying another word.

INT. FITZSIMMONS RESIDENCE - LIVING AREA - NIGHT

Christmas Day is white and beautiful. It snowed the night before and a stark chill hangs in the air. Mary runs around supervising servants in last minute preparations while Reggie waits to welcome guests. Worried the snow could keep people away, he paces by the front door.

The first guest arrives and is a bit cold.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Mother Nature couldn't keep me away. I wanted to bless the food before the festivities begin.

REGGIE

(cynical smile)

I'm sure that's what the Lord would want.

FATHER O'BRIEN

(laughs)

I know.

They walk into the dining area. A servant girl approaches the reverend with a tray of glasses full of Christmas joy.

REGGIE

Please have a brandy.

There is a knock at the door and Reggie goes to answer it. He guides his other guests into the room.

ALICE

What beautiful decorations.

MOUNTCASTER

You certainly didn't spare any expense, old chap.

FRANÇOISE

The tree is magnificent. Where did you get it.

REGGIE

I had a servant procure it. I'm not sure where.

FRANÇOISE

It is truly beautiful.

Mountcaster puts his arm around Major CLAYTON DUNN.

MOUNTCASTER

I want to introduce you to Major Clayton Dunn, my second in command.

Reggie shakes Dunn's hand.

REGGIE

It's good to meet you.

DUNN

It's my pleasure. I've heard a lot about you.

MOUNTCASTER

(laughs)

Only positive, of course.

Colonel MacCreedy wanders into the room.

MACCREEDY

A servant let me in.

He glances around. He walks up to Françoise.

MACCREEDY (CONT'D)

We must have socials more often.

FRANÇOISE

(smiles)

It does give us something more to think about than day-to-day work schedules.

REGGIE

(lifts his glass)

Here. Here.

MacCreedy motions for Françoise to join him in the veranda.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Work is the Lord's gift to us, and we must obey His word. Daily work is meant to be the road to salvation.

MOUNTCASTER

We're not like these sod-of-the-earth Indian heathens. We have a purpose in life.

FATHER O'BRIEN

That's no way to talk about our Indian brethren.

MOUNTCASTER

How can you defend them, Reverend? They are not to be trusted.

Reggie stands in between the reverend and Mountcaster.

REGGIE

When is a good time for me to be formally introduced to the regiment?

MOUNTCASTER

As soon as possible, if you're ready, old chap.

MARY

I suppose you think the business will run itself.

REGGIE

I have adequate help.

MARY

That might be, but you certainly can't manage it if you are lollygagging around with soldiers.

REGGIE

This is not some sort of schoolboy game. I'll tell you that.

Manwaring enters the room.

MANWARING

I've been waiting for this day, you know, squire. Good food and spirits.

REGGIE

I'm glad you could make it.

MANWARING

By the way, a carriage just pulled up with two gentlemen.

Reggie goes to the front window to see Mancroft and Bryson walking to the front door. He lets them in. They both take their coats off and give them to a servant standing by. Mountcaster lurks behind Reggie.

BRYSON

I trust this celebration is in anticipation of a brilliant performance in the coming year.

REGGIE

And what does that mean exactly?

MANCROFT

Only that next year should be more promising.

Mountcaster moves in front of Reggie.

MOUNTCASTER

I thought the Fitzsimmons' enterprise was a private concern. He doesn't need you to tell him what to do.

BRYSON

I think you would do well to mind your own business.

MOUNTCASTER

We can manage without you.

Mountcaster walks away.

MANCROFT

I say, a bit of a firebrand. Don't you think? Perhaps you should consider replacing Mountcaster with a more reasonable foreman.

Reggie just stares at Mancroft.

INT. FITZSIMMONS RESIDENCE - VERANDA - NIGHT

Late at night, the partyers drink wildly and stumble about, trying to make sense of it all. Mountcaster seems to have had a few too many; bringing out his winning personality.

DUNN

(addressing Reggie)

How do you feel about joining the forces?

REGGIE

I look forward to it.

BRYSON

You never said anything about joining the army.

REGGIE

I think it's my own business.

BRYSON

I think it is a monumental mistake.

MOUNTCASTER

Of course you would say that.

MANCROFT

If anything, you should join the army of the East India Company.

Mountcaster takes a few swigs of his drink.

MOUNTCASTER

The army of the East India Company is nothing more than a bunch of schoolboys running around playing war. It's the British Army, the Queen's Army, that has kept India intact.

MANCROFT

What did you say?

MOUNTCASTER

You heard me.

Mary swaggers up to Reggie.

MARY

He shouldn't join the army at all.
He is a businessman, plain and
simple.

Reggie doesn't respond, but glares at his wife.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Perhaps you should take more time
to decide.

MOUNTCASTER

He doesn't need your advice.

Father O'Brien hangs his head and walks away.

MANCROFT

Will you be celebrating another
Christmas in India?

REGGIE

I intend to.

MANCROFT

Since I never saw the business plan
I asked for, I want a full account
of your activities every month.

Reggie glances over at Mountcaster before he responds.

REGGIE

Whatever you wish.

MANCROFT

(glances at Bryson)

We must go. We thank you for an
unexpected celebration of the new
year. I only hope it's what we
expect.

Reggie walks them to the front door.

INT. REGGIE FITZSIMMONS' OFFICE - DAY (1857)

A month later in the late morning, Reggie is attempting to write a detailed business plan. Françoise waltzes in the office.

FRANÇOISE

It's much better weather this year
so far.

REGGIE

(smiles)

I'm struggling to write this bloody
business plan. I think it's a bit
too long.

FRANÇOISE

You must understand, sir. These
bureaucrats are used to reading
endless lines of meaningless mumbo
jumbo. They somehow think if it is
long and flowing, it must be a
sterling effort. Of course, they
are all mouth and no trousers, so
we have to lean toward their sense
of levity.

REGGIE

(laughs)

I'll keep that in mind.

Reggie puts the paperwork aside and sits back. Françoise
takes the hint and takes a seat.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

I need to discuss something with
you.

FRANÇOISE

Is there something wrong, sir? Have
I done something you do not approve
of? I can certainly correct the
problem.

REGGIE

No, It's nothing like that. I
simply need you to help me manage
the business when I'm busy with
military duties.

FRANÇOISE

I would be honored.

They can hear the front door open and shut. Mary enters the
office with a look of disdain. Françoise stands and departs
without saying a word. Mary takes a seat.

REGGIE

We were having a business meeting.

MARY

Father O'Brien will be here shortly.

REGGIE

What for?

MARY

The reverend is coming over to talk some sense into you concerning your insistence on joining the British Army.

REGGIE

That's rather preposterous, wouldn't you say? What can he possibly say that will make me change my mind?

MARY

He's only trying to help.

Françoise brings the reverend in and departs.

FATHER O'BRIEN

I must say it's good to see the God's green earth again.

REGGIE

Granted. What can I do for you today?

MARY

The reverend has come to discuss your plans to ruin our business.

REGGIE

I have no plans to ruin our business.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Things like this have a way of getting out of hand.

REGGIE

I see no harm.

MARY

You must listen to reason. If you wanted to be in the army, you should have joined while you were still in London instead of coming here to be a businessman.

FATHER O'BRIEN

The Lord does not give more than one can handle. It only makes sense to do one thing at a time.

Reggie stands and faces his wife.

REGGIE

I thank you for your advice. Now if you don't mind, I have other matters to attend to.

MARY

How dare you tell us to leave. This is for your own good. And mine.

Father O'Brien grabs Mary's arm and motions for them to leave.

EXT. 9TH LANCERS TRAINING AREA - DAY

A week later, in the light drizzle, Reggie stands dressed in his new uniform at attention waiting to take command of his detachment. He had been sworn in earlier in the morning and is now ready to lead by example.

Mountcaster marches a band of sepoy's up to Reggie's position. Colonel MacCreedy stands in the background.

MOUNTCASTER

Men, I introduce you to your new sergeant.

REGGIE

It is an honor to serve in the British Army. We must all behave with courage and distinction in the face of adversity. I pledge that I will never fail you as your leader.

Not sure what else to say, he looks over at Mountcaster, who in turn with a wave of his hand dismisses the group and they walk away in different directions.

INT. 9TH LANCERS HEADQUARTERS OFFICE - DAY

The regimental officers sit around the conference table and discuss Reggie's commitment.

MOUNTCASTER

You look good in a uniform, old chap.

MACCREEDY

Impressive speech, although a bit brief, but I say you are destined for a brilliant career.

Reggie adjusts his uniform, and has a look of discomfort as he talks.

REGGIE

You never told me.

MOUNTCASTER

Told you what, old chap?

REGGIE

About being in charge of a bunch of sepoys.

MACCREEDY

I have full confidence that because of your natural leadership abilities, you will be able to mold the characters of the natives we cannot.

MOUNTCASTER

We all have responsibilities with our Indian compatriots. You shouldn't be an exception.

REGGIE

I don't intend to be. I have to believe the sepoys are a difficult lot.

MACCREEDY

You'll be fine.

Mountcaster points to a picture of Queen Victoria.

MOUNTCASTER

That's what it's all about. God, Queen, and country. We serve at her pleasure. All of us.

A YOUNG SERGEANT enters the room.

YOUNG SERGEANT

Sir, he's here.

MOUNTCASTER

Send him in.

A tall, muscular native enters the room. His name is USMAN, and he is designated to be Reggie's bodyguard.

MOUNTCASTER (CONT'D)
Reggie, I want you to meet Usman.
He will be your assistant and
bodyguard.

USMAN
It's a pleasure to meet you, sir.

REGGIE
Likewise.

MOUNTCASTER
Usman has been assigned to you for
overall protection and will be with
you anytime you are at the
regimental compound.

MACCREEDY
I want the two of you to get to
know one another and suggest you
have some time alone.

Reggie and Usman glance at each other and smile.

EXT. 9TH LANCER'S PARADE GROUNDS - DAY

Reggie and Usman walks slowly along the parade grounds in the light rain.

USMAN
I respect your rank and will do
everything in my power to ensure
your privacy.

REGGIE
You've been here for some time.
What are these soldiers really
like?

USMAN
Most are respectable. There are a
few that are no good, but I suppose
that is commonplace.

REGGIE
What are the sepoy's like?

USMAN

You must be careful. Many resent the British way of life. They can be stubborn sometimes.

REGGIE

You're a native. Do they resent you for supporting our cause?

USMAN

They know where I stand. I wouldn't worry about it.

Reggie slaps Usman on the arm.

REGGIE

It's raining a little harder. We should get back. We can talk more later.

Usman grins as they turn around to go back to headquarters.

INT. MANJU'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Two weeks later, Reggie and Manju lay in bed, cuddled together.

MANJU

You seem angry.

REGGIE

I'm really tired from spending a great deal of time with the army while at the same time trying to run a business.

MANJU

That's what I thought you wanted.

REGGIE

Yes, but I didn't realize the seriousness of it.

Manju strokes Reggie's hair.

MANJU

Tell them you aren't cut out for both.

REGGIE

I have to lead a squadron of sepoy's because MacCreedy and Mountcaster can't properly deal with them.

MANJU

It will be all right. Many Indian soldiers are devoted patriots of their profession, but there will always be several who will try a man's patience.

She hesitates; leaning over to kiss him on the cheek.

MANJU (CONT'D)

You must give them a chance.

REGGIE

I suppose.

MANJU

Will you be going away with the cavalry?

REGGIE

I must remain close to my business.

Reggie hugs her and smiles.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

To you.

MANJU

What about your marriage?

REGGIE

Our marriage is more of a business partnership now. That must stay intact.

Reggie leans over and kisses Manju before they begin to make love.

INT. REGGIE FITZSIMMONS' OFFICE - DAY

Françoise abruptly comes into the office and hands Reggie a letter she received, She takes a seat while Reggie opens the envelope and pulls out the one page, one paragraph note.

REGGIE

Do you know who this is from?

FRANÇOISE

It came from London, so I can perhaps guess.

REGGIE

It's from my bloody father-in-law. He wants to know why I so brazenly joined the army instead of putting my full attention to the business.

FRANÇOISE

You must respond, but in a decent manner.

REGGIE

My wife put him up to this. That's the only answer.

FRANÇOISE

Take a deep breath and compose yourself. By the way, Omar Bandar, the businessman from Calcutta is due this morning.

REGGIE

When?

FRANÇOISE

He should have been here by now.

Reggie nods his head. His secretary goes to her office.

INT. REGGIE FITZSIMMONS' OFFICE - DAY

In the early afternoon, Françoise brings OMAR BANDAR into the office, smiles, and departs. The businessman looks around and takes a seat.

REGGIE

I'm glad you could make it. Do you wish to have an afternoon brandy?

OMAR

Sounds delightful.

Reggie goes over and pours Brandy into two glasses; takes one to Omar and goes back to his desk.

OMAR (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I'm late. An incident on the train held us up. At any rate, how may I assist you, Mr. Fitzsimmons?

REGGIE

I'm afraid I need a helping hand.
We are not living up to our
potential.

Omar picks up his satchel, opens it up and brings out a few
pierces of ware. Françoise enters the office and sits.

OMAR

As you can see, I brought a few
artifacts that are in high demand.

Reggie picks up several artifacts and studies them.

REGGIE

They appear well crafted.

FRANÇOISE

Yes, they certainly are beautiful.

REGGIE

We have a warehouse full of locally
made products, specifically for
export to Britain. Could we perhaps
form some sort of alliance that
would benefit both of us?

OMAR

Indeed. I'm always willing to help
a new enterprise. Perhaps financial
papers could be drawn up as soon as
possible.

REGGIE

Françoise can oblige you.

All of a sudden, Reggie sees Mary standing in the doorway.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

We are having a meeting.

MARY

I did not come all this way to be
dismissed.

(points at Françoise)
What is she doing here?

REGGIE

She's my secretary. Or have you
forgotten?

Françoise, appearing embarrassed, walks out of the office.

MARY

You listen to me. I am tired of the way you manage this business. And I want answers.

REGGIE

How dare you come in here and embarrass me in front of my secretary and guest!

MARY

I must assume you received father's letter.

REGGIE

It just arrived.

MARY

My intent was not to embarrass but to make a point.

REGGIE

And that is?

MARY

You told father you would come to India and establish a thriving business yourself. What happened?

Omar speaks before Reggie can respond.

OMAR

Our alliance is in no way attributed to the perception that Reggie has a failing business.

MARY

(chuckles)

With due respect, you have no idea what has been going on with the Merchant Traders of London.

REGGIE

Enough!

(smirks)

You need to leave.

(incensed)

You had no right to get your father involved. This is unforgivable.

MARY

If you weren't playing soldier, you probably could make this business a success.

REGGIE

Are you an expert on the British
Army?

MARY

Of course not, but I know it
demands total allegiance.

Reggie looks over at Omar.

REGGIE

Expect our agreement in the mail.
We will meet again in the near
future.

Mary bends down and grabs her father's letter and rushes out
of the office. The other two just stare at one another.

INT. EAST INDIA COMPANY DEPOT - CALCUTTA - DAY

Two men sit at a small conference table in a large ornate
room waiting for a third man to arrive. The door is opened
and in comes Richard Clarke. He sits directly across from the
executives of the East India Company.

MANCROFT

I'm sorry it had to come to this.
We had no other choice.

CLARKE

I take my responsibilities very
seriously.

BRYSON

We may be at an impasse with The
Merchant Traders of London.

CLARKE

Something that can be mended, I
presume.

MANCROFT

Your son-in-law mistakenly believes
he can run a business while serving
the British Army.

Clarke hesitates; looks away for a moment.

CLARKE

I am aware of such stupidity and I
intend to correct it.

MANCROFT

He's not the businessman you thought he was and quite frankly you should either replace him or shut down the firm.

CLARKE

Allow me to talk to him first and provide the council he needs.

BRYSON

He appears far too obstinate to me.

MANCROFT

(addressing Clarke)

You and I will go to Delhi to talk sense into him. But I'm not sure dismissing the army will do any good. His financial reports are deplorable.

CLARKE

One can only hope for the best.

The frowns on their faces are only too telling.

INT. REGGIE FITZSIMMONS' OFFICE - DAY

Late in the day, as Reggie is about to go home, Mountcaster comes into the office and plops down in a chair.

REGGIE

What's the matter?

MOUNTCASTER

I haven't seen Qureshi in three days. No one at the warehouse has seen him either.

REGGIE

Perhaps his mother is sick again.

MOUNTCASTER

His mother's not sick and you know it. He's not worth our time and should be fired.

REGGIE

We shouldn't jump to conclusions.

Mountcaster pounds his fist on the arm of his chair.

MOUNTCASTER

I understand. But when we find Qureshi, I think the best course of action is to fire him. By the way, I must go see MacCreedy in the morning.

REGGIE

Aren't you spending too much time with the regiment and not enough time managing the warehouse?

MOUNTCASTER

What are you saying, old chap? That I'm to blame for your disappointments?

REGGIE

Only that we all must commit ourselves to this enterprise.

Suddenly, Françoise is standing in the doorway blocking another individual. He quickly moves around her.

QURESHI

(agitated)

I want to talk to Mr. Fitzsimmons.

Mountcaster stands and approaches Qureshi.

MOUNTCASTER

Where have you been?

QURESHI

None of your business.

MOUNTCASTER

You are out of line.

REGGIE

What do you want?

Mountcaster stands in between them.

MOUNTCASTER

I want an answer. Where were you?

QURESHI

I told you, it's none of your business.

Mountcaster lunges forward and grabs Qureshi by the collar and starts shaking him.

MOUNTCASTER

I want the truth, you son of a bitch! Tell me.

They begin to throw punches. Mountcaster throws Qureshi to the floor. They continue to punch each other. Reggie goes over and pulls Mountcaster off Qureshi.

REGGIE

Get up! Both of you.
(addresses Qureshi)
What is so important that you burst into my office unannounced?

QURESHI

You are courting Manju Chandha.
What are your intentions?

REGGIE

That's none of your concern.

QURESHI

Manju and I have been promised in marriage by our families. She belongs to me and no one else.

Reggie's face becomes ridged. He fidgets in his chair while looking at Mountcaster. He is having a hard time getting the words out.

REGGIE

I didn't know. I'm sorry.

QURESHI

Even though I work for you, I must speak my mind. I want you to leave Manju alone. Is that understood?

REGGIE

Yes. Now if you'll excuse me, I have work to do.

Qureshi storms out of the office. Mountcaster paces in front of the window while he looks askance at Reggie.

INT. MANJU'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

The dim light of the small lamp cast shadows across Manju's face as Reggie is trying to confront his disbelief.

REGGIE

Why didn't you tell me about Nevi?

MANJU

I didn't want you to know. My parents arranged the marriage only a year ago. I am not in love with Nevi. I don't really even know him that well.

REGGIE

Must you marry him?

MANJU

Yes. I have no choice.

REGGIE

But you just said you didn't love him.

MANJU

It's our culture.

REGGIE

Tell your parents you don't want to marry him.

MANJU

That's out of the question. Besides, you are married and our love can never be.

Reggie doesn't respond, but rather kisses her passionately.

EXT. 9TH LANCER'S PARADE GROUNDS - DAY

On 10 April, Reggie stands motionless on the parade grounds waiting to march his squadron of sepoy to where Major Mountcaster has just been promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and commander of the 9th Lancers. Colonel MacCreedy is taking a new command in Bengal.

The signal is given for the pass and review. The small band begins to play. The sepoy march out with Reggie right beside them. Other squadrons join. The parade consists of soldiers on horseback with rifles at the ready, canons being carried behind carriages, and boxes of ammunition and supplies being displayed on a separate dray.

INT. 9TH LANCERS HEADQUARTERS OFFICE - DAY

After the ceremony, the senior officers meet to commemorate the change of command. They all hold their glasses of stout ale high in the air.

MOUNTCASTER

To the 9th Lancers. May we never die.

MACCREEDY

I believe I leave the 9th Lancers in good hands.

(smiles)

Here. Here.

REGGIE

(addressing MacCreedy)

When do you leave?

MACCREEDY

Not sure. Within several months I presume.

MOUNTCASTER

(points at Reggie)

I'm ready to serve, if that's what you mean. We'll see this through together, old chap.

REGGIE

Yes, of course.

DUNN

We will carry on as usual.

MACCREEDY

The times are difficult now, especially with the resentment of many of the British soldiers against the Indian natives.

MOUNTCASTER

It will not deter me, sir.

DUNN

They will do as we say.

MACCREEDY

I've noticed a growing resentment from many of the sepoys and you must be mindful of their behavior.

Reggie looks over at Mountcaster.

MOUNTCASTER

See, I told you, old chap. You can't trust them.

REGGIE

But we must respect them as soldiers.

MOUNTCASTER

Certainly not equals. They have their place. We all know that is true.

REGGIE

What if they protest?

MOUNTCASTER

We will put them in their place. By the way, I have asked Usman in an official capacity to be with you at all times, even when you are not in uniform.

REGGIE

Is that necessary?

MOUNTCASTER

It's for your own good.

Mountcaster motions for Reggie to go to the side of the room.

MOUNTCASTER (CONT'D)

(whispers)

You will do well to stay away from that servant girl. She's nothing more than a filthy whore.

Reggie is taken aback by the comment. He starts toward Mountcaster but stops. His face contorts with anger.

REGGIE

What I do in my private life is none of your business. Your hatred of Indians will do you in.

They stand toe-to-toe and gawk at one another.

INT. FITZSIMMONS RESIDENCE - VERANDA - NIGHT

The next night, Reggie again sits staring at the lights of Delhi when Mary walks in and takes a seat. Her demeanor suggests she's in a bad mood.

REGGIE

I have decided to go to Calcutta to see Omar.

MARY

Why would you possibly do that?

REGGIE

I believe he can help us. He is a seasoned businessman.

MARY

Honestly Reggie, I don't know what's gotten into you.

REGGIE

(laughs)

I don't know either.

MARY

It's not funny. I know what you're up to. You want to merge with Omar and I won't have it.

REGGIE

How do you know that?

Mary disappears for a moment and when she comes back she holds a small folder in the air.

MARY

This is how!

REGGIE

You went through my belongings at work?

MARY

You will stop doing things behind my back and you must resign your position in the army. That's what my father, your benefactor, would want.

REGGIE

As my father used to say. When hell freezes over.

Mary frowns at her husband and marches off: dismantled shoulders and all.

INT. REGGIE FITZSIMMONS' OFFICE - DAY

In the late morning of the next day, Reggie sits at his desk, staring at the wall, waiting for his secretary to join him. She walks in with pen and paper in hand. She goes over and looks out the front window before sitting.

REGGIE

I'm planning to give you more responsibilities in the future and want to ensure you are not planning on leaving anytime soon.

FRANÇOISE

Not that I'm aware of. What is this all about?

Reggie appears embarrassed. He seems to be searching for words.

REGGIE

Are you content working for me?

FRANÇOISE

I enjoy working here very much. Have I not made that apparent?

Reggie hesitates; sitting back in his chair and taking a deep breath.

REGGIE

I understand through reliable sources Colonel MacCreedy has proposed.

FRANÇOISE

I'm not willing to discuss my personal life with you. It's a private matter.

REGGIE

I just don't want to lose your services, knowing you might move away.

FRANÇOISE

I'll let you know my plans when the time comes.

Commotion in the courtyard garners their attention. They both go over to observe. Reggie can't believe what he sees. Mancroft and his father-in-law exit the carriage and head to the front door.

REGGIE

(frantic)

Go greet them and bring them in. And please bring in some refreshments.

She complies. Seconds later, they enter the office.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

(unnerved)

It's certainly good to see both of you. I was waiting to meet with a local merchant.

They glance around the room and take a seat.

CLARKE

He can wait.

MANCROFT

We have matters of business to discuss. I trust you will oblige.

CLARKE

Besides the letter I received from my daughter, I was contacted by Mr. Mancroft a month ago to say the Merchant Traders of London is in serious trouble.

REGGIE

I can explain.

CLARKE

I trusted you to run this business.

Mancroft sits straight in his chair and adjusts his cravat.

MANCROFT

I must say, Mr. Fitzsimmons, you have a flair for incompetence.

REGGIE

I've had some setbacks, but I think we are starting to make a profit.

MANCROFT

(smirks)

Not nearly enough.

CLARKE

Your tax liability is more than you bring in.

REGGIE

I should be exempt until I get on my feet.

CLARKE

You should resign from the military.

(MORE)

CLARKE (CONT'D)

There's no logic in trying to do both. If not, we may have to close business in Delhi.

REGGIE

The lack of profitability has nothing to do with the army.

MANCROFT

Then what is the problem?

REGGIE

(bleeding heart)

I'm trying to do my best. Please give me some more time to make things right.

Clarke looks over at Mancroft; scratches head.

CLARKE

I will give you six more months to make a better profit.

MANCROFT

(nervous cough)

Your son-in-law certainly cannot be trusted.

CLARKE

Let me make that decision. I will pay the taxes for the time being.

REGGIE

(smiles)

I know I can make a go of it.

MANCROFT

Not until you let go of this army fascination of yours.

CLARKE

Our reputation in India rests with you. I know you will do what is right.

They stand, shake Reggie's hand and let themselves out. His secretary joins him.

FRANÇOISE

What did you say to your father-in-law to change his mind?

REGGIE

I think perhaps we've been given a reprieve simply because my father-in-law resents having his investment ruined.

FRANÇOISE

We must sit down later and figure this all out.

REGGIE

You see, that's why I don't want to lose you.

She smiles at him and walks out of the office.

EXT. SMALL INFIRMARY - DELHI - DAY

A month later, in early May, in the early morning, Manwaring drops Reggie off at the front of the infirmary and parks the carriage on the side of the building.

INT. INFIRMARY LOBBY - DAY

Reggie immediately sees Mountcaster and approaches him.

REGGIE

What happened?

MOUNTCASTER

Françoise was attacked last evening. She was raped and beaten.

REGGIE

Is she all right?

MOUNTCASTER

I'm not sure.

An older DOCTOR approaches them.

DOCTOR

It will take some time, but she should make a full recovery.

REGGIE

Was she really raped?

DOCTOR

It was vicious, but I've seen worse.

MOUNTCASTER
Can we see her?

DOCTOR
Follow me.

INT. PATIENT ROOM - INFIRMARY - DAY

They walk in the room. Françoise is lying on her back, staring at the ceiling. They get close enough for her to realize they are there. Her face is swollen and highly bruised, her eyes practically shut.

REGGIE
I'm so sorry this happened to you.

MOUNTCASTER
Did you see who did this to you?

She appears to still be in shock.

FRANÇOISE
I don't know. I don't know.

DOCTOR
We should let her rest.

Reggie brushes his hand against her face. They turn and walk out of the room.

INT. INFIRMARY LOBBY - DAY

Reggie and Mountcaster stop in the lobby for a few moments.

MOUNTCASTER
I bet that bastard Qureshi did it.

REGGIE
Why would you say that?

MOUNTCASTER
Because he has been missing again.
I know he has been up to something.

REGGIE
But assault and rape? Why would he do it?

MOUNTCASTER
I suspect Nevi isn't who he says he is.

(MORE)

MOUNTCASTER (CONT'D)

A medical student trying to earn extra money for school? He's a criminal.

Reggie begins to pace back and forth.

REGGIE

We don't know that.

MOUNTCASTER

I'm going to find him if it's the last thing I do.

REGGIE

My immediate concern is for Françoise's welfare.

MOUNTCASTER

Mine too, old chap, but I for one will bring this criminal to justice.

Mountcaster turns to walk away, but stops and faces Reggie.

MOUNTCASTER (CONT'D)

There are reports sepoys are starting to cause trouble near Meerut. We must respond immediately.

REGGIE

Go without me. I'll meet up with you at the garrison.

INT. FITZSIMMONS RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Reggie, saddened, walks into the bedroom and sees Mary propped up in bed; sniffing and looking haggard.

MARY

What's the matter with you?

REGGIE

Françoise was beaten and raped by an unknown assailant.

MARY

Where did this happen?

REGGIE

What does it matter? She could have been killed. Why are you in bed?

MARY
I don't feel well.

Reggie notices what looks like an opium pipe on the night stand. He points at the pipe.

REGGIE
Does that make you feel better?

MARY
Yes. Do you mind?

Mary adjusts herself on the bed and leans forward.

MARY (CONT'D)
Do you have any idea where are servants are?

REGGIE
No.

MARY
I haven't seen them; especially Manju. Where is she?

REGGIE
I will find out.

MARY
Don't think I don't know.

REGGIE
Know what?

MARY
That you've been rolling around in bed with her.

Mary hesitates; picks up the pipe and inhales.

MARY (CONT'D)
You're such a banal whore of a man.

REGGIE
(incensed)
I don't need a lecture.

Reggie quickly walks out of the bedroom.

INT. MANJU'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Reggie opens the door and walks in the bungalow. It is dark and somewhat dank. He turns a light on.

He checks all the rooms. He starts to leave and notices a note on a small table in the corner. He picks it up and reads it. REGGIE, I'M SORRY. NEVI HAS TAKEN ME AWAY. I WILL LOVE YOU ALWAYS.

Reggie sits in a chair and stares at the note.

INT. REGGIE FITZSIMMONS' OFFICE - DAY

In the early morning, Reggie paces the length of his office. He is confused, bewildered and doesn't know what to do.

The front door opens and shuts, making a loud noise; startling Reggie. Mountcaster comes into the office.

MOUNTCASTER

I expected you at the garrison.

REGGIE

I know, but the business can't run itself. I don't know when Françoise will return if at all.

MOUNTCASTER

I understand full well, old chap, but we have more in which to be concerned.

Reggie stares out the window.

MOUNTCASTER (CONT'D)

I know this is not a good time for you, but we have a rebellion on our hands. We marched on them yesterday and we lost a few men.

Mountcaster grabs Reggie and turns him around.

MOUNTCASTER (CONT'D)

We need you help!

REGGIE

I want to check on Françoise. I will meet you there.

MOUNTCASTER

That's what you said the last time. This rebellion is no trivial matter, old chap.

REGGIE

(sneers)

Neither is Françoise's health.

EXT. 9TH LANCERS STAGING AREA - SMALL QUONSET HUT - DAY

Lieutenant Colonel Mountcaster and his men sit around a crooked table getting ready for action. Reggie enters and immediately takes a seat.

REGGIE

Sorry I'm late.

MOUNTCASTER

Did you see your secretary?

REGGIE

She will be released tomorrow and said she will mind the store.

MOUNTCASTER

Very well, old chap. There is another insurrection near Meerut. We must take action against these wayward sepoy.

REGGIE

What do I tell my men?

MOUNTCASTER

They get paid to fight. Tell them that.

DUNN

They'll feel our wrath if they don't.

Mountcaster goes over to a new member of the regiment, Captain DAVID DONALDSON, and pates him on the back.

MOUNTCASTER

Fitzsimmons, I want you to meet Captain Donaldson. He just arrived from Burma and is a brilliant military strategist.

DONALDSON

I don't know about that, but we need to crush this rebellion now before it gets much worse.

DUNN

We cannot take them for granted.

REGGIE

These sepoy are military soldiers. How can we tell who's loyal who's not?

DUNN

It's often a mystery.

Sergeant IAN SAINT IVES walks in and throws his gloves on the table.

SAINT IVES

Sorry I was delayed. I was attempting to quell a fight between two sepoys training in the bivouac area.

REGGIE

Are they becoming restless?

SAINT IVES

They are conflicted and we need to nip it in the bud. I have never trusted them and will never turn my back on one.

REGGIE

They seem undernourished and unenthused to me.

DONALDSON

All natives are unenthused and undernourished. It's a cultural thing, old boy.

REGGIE

We must devise a plan to ensure unwavering compliance from the sepoy squadrons.

DONALDSON

We will put the fear of God in them so they don't dare disobey orders.

SAINT IVES

We must do it soon.

Usman walks in.

MOUNTCASTER

Where have you been?

USMAN

Getting sepoys ready for battle.

MOUNTCASTER

You were supposed to be guarding Fitzsimmons.

REGGIE
It's not necessary.

Dunn stands to get ready to move outside.

DUNN
What did the sepoys say.

USMAN
Other sepoys should come to their senses.

EXT. 9TH LANCERS STAGING AREA - DAY

Reggie and Usman walk along a dirt path to the stables.

REGGIE
If you don't mind me asking, what makes sepoys tick?

USMAN
They're no different from other native Indians, except they want to serve in a military role.

REGGIE
What do they expect from their superiors?

USMAN
We want to be respected for our contributions and, of course, paid for our services.

REGGIE
But what kind of loyalty could you possibly have to the British?

USMAN
Are you questioning my loyalty?

REGGIE
No, I'm just concerned this rebellion could get out of hand.

USMAN
We all are.

They continue walking toward the stables.

EXT. 9TH LANCERS STAGING AREA - DAY

An hour later, the regiment stands at attention; calming their horses. Mountcaster rides up to the front and gazes at his men.

MOUNTCASTER

One again we ride to Meerut. It is getting worse and the rebels will suffer the consequences.

DUNN

I say take no prisoners.

Dunn gives the signal and they ride off toward Meerut. Reggie and Usman stay to the rear with their squadron of sepoy.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF MEERUT - DAY

As they ride toward a wastelands miles from Meerut, they can see men dead on the ground: shot at close range. Some were run through with swords. Most of the dead are sepoy but a few are British soldiers from another regiment. Stopping for a moment, Mountcaster counts the men and motions to a handful of soldiers to stay behind and bury the British soldiers.

When they arrive closer to Meerut, it appears to be a ghost town. Dead men, women, and children clutter the streets. Apparently too late, Mountcaster signals for the regiment to return to garrison.

EXT. WHITEHALL - NIGHT

In the early evening, Reggie rides into the courtyard and dismounts. He paces in circles, practically stumbling. He walks toward the front door.

INT. REGGIE FITZSIMMONS' OFFICE - NIGHT

Reggie slowly goes over to his desk. It appears to be in disarray: folders and papers scattered all over it. He sits and puts his head in his hands, resting his elbows on the desk after pushing debris aside. He's startled by a voice.

FRANÇOISE

Are you okay, sir.

He stands and hugs her. Her appearance shows stress; haggard face and disheveled clothes.

REGGIE
Tired, but otherwise I'm fine. You
look wonderful.

FRANÇOISE
I wish I could agree.

REGGIE
How's our business?

FRANÇOISE
Deplorable.

REGGIE
I was afraid of that.

FRANÇOISE
I never thought I would say this,
but you need to resign your
military duties and spend more time
here.

She takes a seat.

REGGIE
You sound like my wife.

FRANÇOISE
She's been here twice.

REGGIE
What did she want?

FRANÇOISE
I'm sure you know.

REGGIE
(frustrated)
How in hell did this happen? We
didn't come here expecting a native
rebellion. We should have stayed in
London.

FRANÇOISE
No one expected this, sir.

REGGIE
How can we run a business when
people are killing people?

Reggie tries to contain his anger. He attempts a smile.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
You should go home.

Françoise stands and walks toward the door.

FRANÇOISE
I can take care of myself.

REGGIE
I'm expected back at the regiment.
Please be careful.

Reggie goes over and hugs Françoise and walks out of the office.

EXT. 9TH LANCERS STAGING AREA - NIGHT

In the pouring rain, Reggie and Usman huddle in a small tent; waiting for the morning to come.

REGGIE
Mountcaster tells me this could end soon; that it was instigated by a few old sods angry at the world.

USMAN
It will only end when we end it. He has underestimated their resolve.

REGGIE
What do they want?

The tent begins to leak and they cover themselves with blankets.

USMAN
Most are tired of British rule.

REGGIE
We aren't leaving India any time soon.

USMAN
And that's why they're so angry.

REGGIE
There has to be a way to get through to them.

USMAN
We cannot reason with belligerent sepoys. We will have to cut them down.

Reggie lays back in frustration.

EXT. WASTELAND SOUTHEAST OF DELHI - DAY

The regiment rides into an area close to Aligarh. They stop to canvass the area. It is known for a strong rebel presence. In the distance they see fighters approaching at a fast pace.

The horses dig their hooves in. The charge is merciless, as British cavalry opens fire on their enemy. Many sepoys fall trying to shield themselves. The British infantry preceded them and are still fighting with great expectations. The cavalry now lunges at the menacing sepoys. Swords swing high and low, cutting men's heads off. Pistols and rifles are fired indiscriminately.

Blood seeps into the wet ground. But the sepoys reciprocate, killing as many soldiers. When the charge of the British soldiers finally begins to overtake the line of mutineers, many of the sepoys retreat; some are killed, as others make their way down the ridge toward the road.

Mountcaster is shot in the hand at close range, and by the time one of the medics attends to it, he decides amputation is necessary. In an open field, with not much in the way of sterile surroundings, the medic applies a tight tourniquet and shoves a bullet in Mountcaster's mouth after soaking a rag in whiskey to treat the wound. He severs the limb while Mountcaster squirms and makes the worst guttural sounds anyone has ever heard.

EXT. FITZSIMMONS RESIDENCE - NIGHT

In the early evening when the sun is beginning to set, Reggie and Usman arrive at Reggie's home. Tired and angry, they dismount.

USMAN

Our commander is incapacitated.

REGGIE

Dunn will simply take command.

They gaze around the area.

USMAN

Nothing seems out of place.

REGGIE

I need to check on my wife.

USMAN

(grins)

I need a drink.

INT. FITZSIMMONS RESIDENCE - VERANDA - NIGHT

Usman gazes at the lights of Delhi. Reggie brings in a battle of Brandy and two glasses. They drink several rounds.

REGGIE
I'm worried, she's not here.

USMAN
I'm sure she's safe.

Reggie begins to walk around and notices a piece of paper on a small cabinet. He picks it up. It reads: REGGIE, I'M WITH FATHER O'BRIEN AT HIS SMALL CHURCH. IT'S TOO DANGEROUS HERE.

USMAN (CONT'D)
We should leave.

REGGIE
I want to check the servant's quarters.

INT. MANJU'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

They walk in the bungalow and begin to look around. It appears no one has been there.

As they began to leave, Reggie hears noises coming from inside the house. With his rifle extended straight ahead, he walks slowly; surveying the area. Usman is right behind. Almost immediately, they see a shadow of a person running into the pantry.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Who are you and what are you doing here?

He opens the pantry door and sees Manju was cowering in the corner.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
I thought you were with Qureshi.

He picks her up and hugs her.

MANJU
He brought me back and said he wants to help his countrymen fight the British.

REGGIE
Where is he now?

MANJU

I don't know.

REGGIE

I want you to stay in my house for now. My wife is being protected elsewhere.

USMAN

We should get her to a safer place as soon as possible.

Reggie nods his head, kisses and hugs Manju before they walk out the door.

EXT. BIVOUCAC AREA INSIDE DELHI CITY LIMITS - DAY

A day later, at first light, the streets are empty and uncharacteristically quiet, except for what sounds like a dog barking in the distance. Mountcaster, Reggie, Dunn, and Usman stand in front of Saint James Church. The troops are starting to mount their horses. Demoralized and in pain, Mountcaster tries to keep his composure.

REGGIE

You shouldn't be here.

MOUNTCASTER

These are my men.

REGGIE

Dunn is more than competent.

MOUNTCASTER

I know, old chap.

The soldiers begin to move out on Dunn's signal. Within seconds, shots begin to ring out from the distance on all fronts. They're riding into a massive ambush. As men fall like apples off a fruit cart, the force disperses in different directions to confuse the enemy.

USMAN

I must save as many of our sepoys as possible.

DUNN

Leave them where they are. That's an order.

Dunn quickly surveys the area.

DUNN (CONT'D)
We need to take cover.

Ignoring the order, Usman runs out and gathers as many men as he can muster in a very short period of time. Mountcaster watches with an angry look on his face.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - LARGE OPEN AREA - DAY

Soldiers hunker down after being attacked. Mountcaster approaches Dunn.

MOUNTCASTER
How many men did we lose?

DUNN
25 unaccounted for, sir.

MOUNTCASTER
Where is Usman?

DUNN
He's on the other side of the room;
attending to our sepoys.

MOUNTCASTER
Follow me.

They approach Usman and Mountcaster stands toe-to-toe with him.

MOUNTCASTER (CONT'D)
You disobeyed a direct order.

USMAN
I couldn't let them die helpless on
the street.

MOUNTCASTER
Orders must be followed.

He points at two guards.

MOUNTCASTER (CONT'D)
Arrest this man.

Reggie hears what's going on and walks up to Mountcaster.

REGGIE
Usman saved those men out of
respect. He shouldn't be punished,
but rather praised.

MOUNTCASTER

He should have done what he was told.

REGGIE

These men are alive because of his bravery.

MOUNTCASTER

Are you saying you would have done the same thing, old chap?

REGGIE

I don't know.

MOUNTCASTER

Because if that's the case, perhaps I should hold you in contempt as well.

Reggie steps closer to his commander.

REGGIE

I was merely stating my opinion; not suggesting military rules should be broken.

MOUNTCASTER

You're in the military now, not running a business where rules tend to be somewhat unimportant.

REGGIE

What are you going to do with Usman?

MOUNTCASTER

He will be confined.

REGGIE

I want him released. You are abusing your power.

Mountcaster steps even closer to Reggie.

MOUNTCASTER

I would watch what you say, old chap. You might not like the consequences.

Reggie steps back and scoffs at his commander.

INT. REGGIE FITZSIMMONS' OFFICE - NIGHT

In the early evening, Reggie walks into his office and sees Françoise sitting at his desk with AKBAR, an Indian man, sitting directly across from her.

FRANÇOISE

Sir, I want to introduce you to Akbar. I hired him to be the foreman at the warehouse while Mr. Mountcaster is unavailable.

Reggie shakes Akbar's hand. Françoise moves so Reggie can sit down.

REGGIE

(angry)
He won't be coming back.
(looks at Akbar)
We'll need you full time.

AKBAR

That won't be a problem.

REGGIE

You realize your countrymen are rebelling.

AKBAR

They don't speak for me.

Reggie rests back in his chair and smiles.

FRANÇOISE

Sir, I have some bad news. Father O'Brien was here yesterday. He told me your wife has gone back to London.

REGGIE

What?

FRANÇOISE

I'm terribly sorry. He said he took her to the train station himself.

Reggie pounds his desk in anger.

REGGIE

Damn her. Have you heard from her father?

FRANÇOISE

No, but I suspect we will.

Reggie just shakes his head.

FRANÇOISE (CONT'D)
 Father O'Brien also told me he
 found one of your servants at your
 house and took her to his church.

REGGIE
 (sighs)
 Manju's safe.

FRANÇOISE
 When do you have to go back to the
 regiment?

REGGIE
 Very soon. Delhi could be overrun
 and we must protect the city.

AKBAR
 Sir, I will help protect your
 business.

REGGIE
 Very well.

They look at each other and nod their heads in agreement.

EXT. 60 FOOT RIDGE OVERLOOKING DELHI - DAY

The high harsh stone ridge overlooks Delhi from the north. From the regiment's vantage point, they can see modest clusters of tall palm trees, vast patches of lush grass, meandering dirt roads, and several large buildings such as Ludlow Castle and Metcalfe House lying between the ridge and the faded walls of the city.

Tents line the ridge as the regiment isn't sure how long they will be there. Reggie sits quietly outside his tent. Tired and sore, he takes short breaths, trying to come to grips with the heavy air. He removes his bulky coat to lessen the heat, but sweat still consumes him terribly.

Captain Donaldson walks up to Reggie and joins him.

DONALDSON
 How are you getting on, old boy?

REGGIE
 Not as good as I was before this
 bloody rebellion started.

DONALDSON

It's only a matter of time before
the British take these defiant
sepoys to task.

REGGIE

(sarcastic)

And life will just go back to
normal.

DONALDSON

Of course.

Major Dunn joins them.

DUNN

Mountcaster wants to breach the
city and Red Fort as soon as
possible.

REGGIE

He wants a bloodbath. Is that it?
(points toward Delhi)
As anyone can see, the sepoys
control the Red Fort.

DUNN

We will not cower down in front of
them.

Dunn hesitates; looking away for a moment.

DUNN (CONT'D)

I know you'll still upset about
Usman, but he must pay for his
indiscretion.

REGGIE

He shouldn't be in prison and you
know it.

DUNN

We cannot change what is done.

Dunn stands and walks away.

DONALDSON

You need to worry about our fight
with the rebels; not Usman.

EXT. INSIDE DELHI CITY LIMITS - NIGHT

On a sweltering evening in mid-August, Mountcaster leads a large group of cavalry troops to an area close to the Kashmiri Gate. Several men with explosives are dispatched to rig the gate doors to explode. Once the sepoys try to engage, the cavalry will charge the bastion, trying to bully their way into the city.

The gate is blown and the troops enter the city, but stop when they hear gunshots in the distance. Mountcaster motions for them to move out slowly.

Reggie, riding in the ear, suddenly breaks away from the group and rides along a side street to an area outside the Kashmiri Gate.

EXT. RED FORT - NIGHT

At dusk, the 9th Lancers storm the Red Fort. A three-man demolition team blows the large wooden doors to pieces. The regiment rushes in. There is massive casualties on both sides as they fight like never before. It lasts for what seems like an eternity. In the end, Mountcaster and his men are triumphant. He seeks Dunn out.

MOUNTCASTER

Where the hell is Fitzsimmons?

DUNN

I don't know. I'll check the dead and injured.

Mountcaster's demeanor shows he is extremely upset.

INT. OLD AMMO STORAGE BUILDING - NIGHT

Reggie enters the foyer of the building, now being used as a jail, and is immediately approached by a SENIOR GUARD.

SENIOR GUARD

What do you want?

REGGIE

The commander wants Usman released.

SENIOR GUARD

I have no record of it. Why has he sent you?

REGGIE
He's busy fighting those damn
sepoys. Now bring him to me.

SENIOR GUARD
This highly unusual.

REGGIE
You heard what I said. You will be
on report.

The senior guard disappears for a few moments. Reggie paces the floor, looking at the squalid walls.

The senior guard brings Usman into the foyer. He is emaciated, disheveled, and in hand and leg chains.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Remove them. Now!

The senior guard removes them. Reggie puts his arm around Usman and they begin to walk out.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
You are released by order of the
commander. You must go with me.

The senior guard watches them with a look of disgust.

EXT. FITZSIMMONS RESIDENCE - DAY

The next day in the early morning, they approach Reggie's residence. Unfortunately, as they round the crest of the tiny ridge, they see the smoldering rubble of his house. The servant quarters are destroyed as well. Despondent at the sight, Reggie walks the grounds, not believing the truth.

USMAN
They took no mercy.

REGGIE
We must go to Whitehall.

They mount their horses and ride away in a quick gallop.

EXT. WHITEHALL - DAY

Reggie and Usman approach Whitehall from a short distance and can see smoke rising in the air. They arrive and dismount. The gate and stone perimeter wall are destroyed.

They walk to the building that is in shambles. The outside structure is barely intact. They enter through what's left of the front door.

INT. WHITEHALL - DAY

They briefly walk around. The interior is gutted.

In what is left of his secretary's office, Reggie stands staring at the ground. His face goes ashen. There on the ground beneath scorched debris is the remains of a leg. He doesn't have the nerve to pick up the rubble so he can see the body. Usman does so instead. The face is barely recognizable, but Reggie can tell it is Françoise. Tears well up in his eyes.

REGGIE

I can't believe what they've done.

USMAN

They're bloody savages.

Reggie and Usman embrace.

EXT. WOODED AREA BEHIND WHITEHALL - DAY

By the middle of the day, they bury Françoise in a small plot behind Whitehall. Reggie stands over the grave with a look of disbelief.

REGGIE

I will always remember you for your dedication in trying to make our business a success, your forthrightness in the face of adversity, and most especially your warm friendship in both good and bad times.

USMAN

You were a saint in a world gone mad.

They slowly walk away.

REGGIE

We must go to the church.

**EXT. TINY BRICK BUILDING - FATHER O'BRIEN'S CHURCH -
SOUTHEAST OF DELHI - DAY**

They approach the small building Father O'Brien is using as a church for teaching local Indians. It is an uncharacteristically quiet afternoon.

INT. PRAYER ROOM - DAY

They sit around a small cracked writing table, no bigger than a chair, and talk. Manju sits right next to Reggie.

FATHER O'BRIEN
I understand the Red Fort was
overrun by the British.

REGGIE
I believe it was.

FATHER O'BRIEN
You weren't there?

REGGIE
I was indisposed.

Reggie hesitates; appearing bothered by something.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Have you seen Qureshi?

MANJU
No, thank God.

FATHER O'BRIEN
Do you think he had anything to do
with this rebellion?

REGGIE
I'm not sure.

USMAN
If so, he's just a lowly soldier.

REGGIE
It doesn't matter. I will track him
down and he will pay dearly.

FATHER O'BRIEN
Where will you go from here?

REGGIE
I must go back to the regiment.

MANJU

Must you?

REGGIE

We have no choice.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Be safe.

Reggie shakes hands with the reverend, and hugs Manju before they depart.

INT. DESERTED CHURCH NEAR KASHMIRI GATE - NIGHT

Tired and feeling the stress, they sit down in one of the dark anterooms to the rear.

REGGIE

Tomorrow morning, we will go see
Mountcaster.

USMAN

Is that wise?

REGGIE

I believe he can be reasonable.

Usman begins to fall asleep sitting in his chair. Reggie lays back and follows suit.

Suddenly, a large noise awakens them. It is Mountcaster, Dunn, Donaldson, and several men pointing rifles at them.

MOUNTCASTER

It's quite a noble gesture, old
chap, that you decided to bring the
prisoner back. You should be
commended.

REGGIE

You don't understand.

MOUNTCASTER

I can't think of a reason why
someone in a military uniform would
assist a prisoner to escape.

REGGIE

Usman is not a criminal.

Mountcaster motions for his men to move around the corner to discuss the matter in private.

DONALDSON

What are you going to do?

MOUNTCASTER

I should execute Usman for treachery. I don't know what I'll do with Fitzsimmons.

DUNN

It is a difficult decision.

MOUNTCASTER

Fitzsimmons should have known better. I can't let my men think that disobeying military regulations is acceptable.

DUNN

I would demote him.

MOUNTCASTER

Doesn't seem like much of a punishment, old chap.

DONALDSON

Reggie's exemplary prior service more than qualifies him for the light sentence.

MOUNTCASTER

(sarcastic)

I'll consider it, After all, he did put his life on hold to serve the force.

Mountcaster starts to walk away; then turns around.

MOUNTCASTER (CONT'D)

But we are in the military and that must be taken very seriously.

INT. PRISON OUTSIDE DELHI CITY LIMITS - NIGHT

In the late evening, Mountcaster and two guards bring Reggie and Usman into the prison. There is an administration area in the front, twenty small cells, and one very large communal area in the rear of the facility.

MOUNTCASTER

Put them in separate cells.

Mountcaster goes to Reggie's cell. Reggie is extremely upset and defiantly stands at the cell door and glares at his commander.

REGGIE

You're making a terrible mistake.

MOUNTCASTER

I'm afraid it is you who has made a terrible mistake, old chap.

REGGIE

What are your intentions?

MOUNTCASTER

I intend to see justice done. You and your bodyguard will be court-martialed for your deliberate crimes.

REGGIE

(nervous laugh)

You have no grounds to punish Usman. Or me for that matter. I want both of us released right now.

MOUNTCASTER

It will be a cold day in hell before I let you two go.

Mountcaster walks away without saying another word.

INT. PRISON OUTSIDE DELHI CITY LIMITS - DAY

Two days later, Reggie slowly gets up from the urine-soaked coarse soil that composes the floor of his cell. He tries to stretch, but the soreness in his neck and back is so painful he finds it difficult to stand up.

Usman, who is in an adjacent cell, stares into space.

Reggie walks to the front of the cell so he talk to Usman.

REGGIE

Sooner or later Mountcaster will have to come to his senses.

USMAN

(passionate)

I had to save those men.

REGGIE

I will make him see the light. He can't get away with this.

USMAN

We don't deserve this.

EXT. PRISON OUTSIDE DELHI CITY LIMITS - DAY

A month later, the dreary weather seems an appropriate forum to decide one's fate, as there is freezing rain and cold winds gusting from the east. It is a Friday, 13 November.

Mountcaster, Dunn, Donaldson, and several guards arrive on horseback at the prison to pronounce sentences. The guards go inside to bring the prisoners outside.

A minute later, the guards bring out Reggie and Usman. They look dirty and disheveled.

MOUNTCASTER

Usman, take two steps forward.

Usman slowly complies.

USMAN

I'm innocent, sir. I have no regrets saving soldier's lives.

MOUNTCASTER

You disobeyed a direct order.

USMAN

I can't believe you would just let soldiers lie in the street and die.

MOUNTCASTER

Fitzsimmons, take two steps forward.

REGGIE

My bodyguard has done nothing wrong, and I had no choice but to protect him.

MOUNTCASTER

I'm disappointed in you, Fitzsimmons. Your loyalties are misplaced.

REGGIE

Do what you want with me, but let Usman go.

MOUNTCASTER

It is with regret, Fitzsimmons,
that I sentence you to five years
hard labor for your crime.

Reggie shakes his head in anger.

REGGIE

That's outrageous.

Mountcaster hesitates; coldly stares at Usman.

MOUNTCASTER

It is with regret that I sentence
Usman to death. Effective
immediately.

Reggie moves forward.

REGGIE

I won't stand for you to shoot
Usman when he's done nothing to
warrant it.

Mountcaster signals for one of his guards to fire. Usman falls backwards on the ground while blood permeates the muddy ground. Reggie can't believe his eyes. Two guards take Reggie, struggling out of defiance, back into the prison.

**EXT. TINY BRICK BUILDING - FATHER O'BRIEN'S CHURCH -
SOUTHEAST OF DELHI - DAY**

Father O'Brien is stacking and arranging Bibles and hymnals when the door busts open. Manju is in the back room. Qureshi abruptly walks over to the reverend.

QURESHI

Where is Manju?

FATHER O'BRIEN

She doesn't want your company.

QURESHI

Where is she?

Manju comes into the room.

MANJU

What do you want?

QURESHI

You're coming with me.

MANJU
You know how I feel.

FATHER O'BRIEN
Please leave her alone and go about
your business.

Qureshi grabs Manju, as she tries to fight back, and begins
to walk out the door.

QURESHI
We're going to Nepal where no one
will find us.

INT. PRISON OUTSIDE DELHI CITY LIMITS - NIGHT

A day later, after dusk, Father O'Brien visits Reggie in his
cell.

FATHER O'BRIEN
I heard about your sentence. I'm
sorry about Usman.

REGGIE
Mountcaster has lost his mind.

The reverend hesitates for a moment and his demeanor becomes
sullen.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
What's wrong.

FATHER O'BRIEN
He has come and taken her away.

REGGIE
How could you let this happen?

FATHER O'BRIEN
I could do nothing about it.

REGGIE
Where has he taken her?

FATHER O'BRIEN
To Nepal. At least that's what he
said.

Father O'Brien paces back and forth.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)
You must excuse me, I will be right
back.

The reverend leaves the cell. Reggie seems distraught. A minute later the reverend comes back with a guard.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

This is Mustaf; one of the guards.
He has agreed to let you take a
walk outside.

They walk along a corridor of cells and out the front door.

EXT. PRISON OUTSIDE DELHI CITY LIMITS - NIGHT

It is dark now and torches burn brightly around the building. Walking away from the light, their faces are barely visible. The guards, armed with rifles, stay to the rear and watch their every move.

FATHER O'BRIEN

You must put your faith in the
Lord. It will help you through he
difficult days ahead.

REGGIE

(snickers)
Perhaps a miracle would help.

Standing on the far north side of the prison, Father O'Brien turns toward the guards. He seems to gesture something to Mustaf.

In an unbelievable moment that appears surreal to Reggie, Mustaf turns and shoots his comrades in the chest at point blank range. Immediately Mustaf and the reverend whisk Reggie to the back of the building around the corner where Akbar is waiting with horses.

AKBAR

We must go. Now!

They ride off quickly, heading for the Jumna River and east toward Nepal.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF LUCKNOW INDIA - DAY

In the late morning of the next day, the travelers arrive at what appears to be an British outpost with the Union Jack prominently flying overhead.

Approaching the immediate area, they are surprised to see women and children. A YOUNG MAJOR approaches them.

REGGIE
What is all this?

YOUNG MAJOR
We witnessed terrible carnage in Lucknow. We believed it was safer here.

FATHER O'BRIEN
What about the women and children?

YOUNG MAJOR
They will be well protected.

REGGIE
Are you in charge?

A senior officer approaches them.

MACCREEDY
No, I am.

The travelers dismount. Reggie goes over and shakes hands with the colonel.

REGGIE
It's good to see you again.

MACCREEDY
I knew you would survive Mountcaster's wrath.

REGGIE
He lost all sense of reason.

MACCREEDY
He is misguided and has no patience.

FATHER O'BRIEN
May we stay here overnight? We must start the trek to Nepal and should be refreshed.

MACCREEDY
Why would you go there? It's very unstable.

REGGIE
Qureshi has taken Manju there. I believe she's in danger.

MACCREEDY
You should reconsider.

EXT. BRITISH OUTPOST - NIGHT

The travelers sit around a campfire as there is a chill in the air.

REGGIE

When I came to India, I never envisioned a rebellion.

MACCREEDY

The sepoy were hell-bent on destroying the British at any cost.

AKBAR

Not all sepoy feel that way.

FATHER O'BRIEN

That is my experience, but many do feel they have been mistreated.

REGGIE

Mountcaster hates sepoy.

MACCREEDY

I have to believe loosing his hand made him more bitter.

REGGIE

It's a wonder he isn't chasing us.

MACCREEDY

(sarcastic smile)

How do you know where in Nepal Qureshi took Manju?

REGGIE

Probably Kathmandu.

MACCREEDY

You must be careful. Besides being unstable. It is extremely cold, and snowing there.

REGGIE

We will take our chances.

They all lean toward the fire to get warm.

EXT. SMALL TEMPLE IN THE FOOTHILLS OF WESTERN NEPAL - NIGHT

In the early evening, in the light snow, they approach the temple and dismount.

Before they can enter, they are accosted by a tall man appearing to be anything but a monk. His name is JUDDHA.

JUDDHA

My name is Juddha. I am the caretaker here. The monks are away in Kathmandu. Can I help you.

REGGIE

We need a place to sleep tonight.

JUDDHA

I can accommodate you.

Reggie looks over at Father O'Brien.

REGGIE

I presume you don't mind.

FATHER O'BRIEN

(smiles)

It has been a long day.

They gather their belongings and enter the temple.

INT. SMALL TEMPLE IN THE FOOTHILLS OF WESTERN NEPAL - DAY

At dawn, Reggie, wanting to get an early start, approaches Akbar to ask him to check on Father O'Brien.

REGGIE

Please tell Father O'Brien we are ready to go.

Akbar goes into the room around the corner where Father O'Brien is resting. Reggie begins to make preparations to depart. Mustaf is pacing around. Akbar quickly comes back in the room.

AKBAR

He's dead.

REGGIE

Are you positive?

AKBAR

I know when a man is dead. We must take him back to Delhi.

Reggie rushes around the corner. He comes back with a horrible look on his face.

REGGIE
He must have died in his sleep.

Reggie approaches Akbar.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
You can't abandon me.

Juddha, now standing there, approaches Reggie.

JUDDHA
I will be your guide if you need
one.

REGGIE
I don't want to impose.

AKBAR
We must prepare Father O'Brien for
the journey home.

Akbar motions for Mustaf to follow him.

JUDDHA
Where are we going?

REGGIE
Kathmandu to find Manju, a servant
girl that needs my help.

INT. NEPALESE EATERY - KATHMANDU - DAY

Two days later in the late afternoon, Reggie and Juddha, exhausted from a merciless trek, enter the eatery. Snow clings to their boots, clothes, and their faces are wind-burned.

They sit at a corner table. There is only a handful of shoddy patrons in the establishment. The walls are black from the smoke of ganja and the floor is nothing but dirt.

Reggie tries to get settled while Juddha goes to get something hot to drink. He comes back with two large cups of green tea.

JUDDHA
Is finding this Qureshi fellow that
important?

REGGIE
He's obsessed with Manju, but
nothing good will come of it.

JUDDHA

Kathmandu is very large. We should ask if anyone has seen them.

Reggie sips his tea and glances around.

REGGIE

I guess it wouldn't hurt.

Juddha notices an OLD MAN sitting in the other side of the eatery. He goes over to him.

JUDDHA

Do you come here often?

OLD MAN

I am the owner. Why?

JUDDHA

Have you seen a strange man with a woman in here recently?

OLD MAN

Several days ago. He said they needed shelter. I told them to go to the monastery on the mountain.

The old man points out the window to the monastery.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

That's where they are.

EXT. LARGE MONASTERY ON THE MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

As they walk on the grounds of the monastery, lights from the many buildings are brilliantly shining across the light bed of snow like a scene from a fairy tale.

Reggie motions they should split up. Juddha walks toward a cloister of a small prayer house and goes in a side door. Reggie walks across the grounds to an ornate chapel.

INT. PRAYER HOUSE - NIGHT

The prayer house is laid out in a very precise labyrinth of mazes. Juddha begins to explore them when he hears a sound. As he walks around a corner, he sees a shadow of a man at the end of the corridor.

QURESHI

Who are you?

JUDDHA
You must be Qureshi.

QURESHI
What do you want?

JUDDHA
What have you done with Manju?

QURESHI
Why do you care? You shouldn't be concerned about what that Englishman wants. He has taken you in.

Juddha begins to walk closer.

JUDDHA
Where is she?

QURESHI
I don't know. She took off and I haven't seen her.

JUDDHA
What have you done with her?

QURESHI
I don't answer to you.

JUDDHA
If she's here, we will find her.

Qureshi slips out a side door. Juddha peruses him, but to no avail.

INT. ORNATE CHAPEL - NIGHT

Reggie enters the chapel. He begins to maneuver around hundreds of candles and flowers randomly placed on elaborate pedestals that surround a rectangular shaped object.

He moves closer and sees Manju laying on a bed of flowers, as if she is dead. Her face is pale and she shows no sign of life. He goes up to her and touches her face. She doesn't respond. He does so again, and she opens her eyes.

REGGIE
How long have you been here?

MANJU
I don't know.

REGGIE
Where is Qureshi?

MANJU
I think he's gone.

REGGIE
Who's been taking care of you?

MANJU
A young monk.

REGGIE
I must find him.

The timid young monk approaches.

YOUNG MONK
I am here.

REGGIE
Where is Qureshi?

YOUNG MONK
I have not seen him.

REGGIE
(angered)
Where is that bastard?

YOUNG MONK
I'm sorry. I don't know.

Reggie paces in front of Manju.

REGGIE
We will leave in the morning.

He looks over at the young monk.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
I'll need your help.

The young monk nods and his head and backs away.

INT. ORNATE CHAPEL - DAY

In the early morning, Reggie begins to prepare Manju for the trek home. He wraps her up with blankets he received from the young monk. He puts his arm around her.

REGGIE

It won't be easy getting over the mountain passes, but I promise you, we will make it back to Delhi.

MANJU

I feel too sick to travel. I need more rest.

REGGIE

We need to get out of here before Qureshi returns.

MANJU

He left me to die. Why would he come back.

REGGIE

(smirks)
He's obsessed.

EXT. HILL OUTSIDE ORNATE CHAPEL - DAY

Minutes later, Reggie brings Manju outside. The young monk is waiting with a travel cart attached to a horse. Juddha is standing right next to him.

The young monk points to the hill adjacent to the chapel. There stands a solitary figure, his long coat ruffling in the wind. Reggie realizes it's Qureshi looking determined.

Without a single thread of fear, Reggie climbs the hill to confront him.

REGGIE

I'm taking Manju home.

QURESHI

I knew you would track us down.

REGGIE

You had no right to take her against her will.

QURESHI

I had every right.

REGGIE

You deserted her. She's sick and you left her to die.

QURESHI

That's no different than you
deserting your wife. You wanted to
fight sepoys more than being a
husband to your wife.

Reggie steps closer.

REGGIE

(points to Manju)
She doesn't belong to you.

QURESHI

Do you really think I will let her
go with you?

REGGIE

You have no choice.

The wind is picking up and a dusting of snow begins to swirl around them. Without any warning, Reggie grabs Qureshi by the shoulders and throws him to the ground. Qureshi quickly gets up and tackles his opponent and begins punching him in the face before Reggie manages to force him to the side.

Qureshi jumps up and pulls a knife. He lunges at Reggie, missing and falling backward into a mound of deep snow. Without a weapon to protect himself, Reggie maneuvers to the right so he can attack his adversary from the side. Reggie pushes Qureshi down immediately, knocking the knife across the knoll and over the cliff. They are struggling only feet away from the edge of the cliff. Both are exhausted, but they keep throwing punches.

In a final fit of rage and determination to rid the world of a misguided renegade, Reggie pushes his weight forward, knocking his aggressor down, and watches as he slips helplessly off the cliff. His horrid screams fill the air. It is now snowing and the winds are terribly gusty.

Carefully looking over the side, Reggie can see Qureshi's body sprawled out on a jagged precipice several feet below.

**EXT. TWO-STORY BUILDING ON THE CORNER OF REGENT AND OXFORD
STREETS - DAY (1862)**

On a bright and sunny day, pedestrians pass along the two-story building that is now the Merchants of London: Reggie Fitzsimmons' new business.

INT. OFFICE OF REGGIE FITZSIMMONS - DAY

Reggie is concluding a business meeting with his benefactor, DAVID POTTER.

REGGIE

I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to succeed.

POTTER

You are certainly exceeding expectations.

REGGIE

I admit I had a hard time of it in India, but I suppose it was fate.

POTTER

I want nothing to do with India.

Reggie stands and shakes Potter's hand.

REGGIE

I will keep you informed of our progress.

Potter walks out the door. Reggie sits back in his chair and smiles. His secretary, ANNETTE, enters.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

That was a pleasant meeting.

She throws several folders on his desk.

ANNETTE

We have more interest in our merchandise.

REGGIE

That's good to hear.

She smiles and leaves the room.

Reggie begins to thumb through the folders when Annette interrupts.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Yes, what is it?

ANNETTE

You have an unexpected visitor.

REGGIE

Who is it?

ANNETTE

She says she's your former wife.

Reggie seems shaken. Mary stands at the door. She is emaciated, ashen face, dark circles under her eyes, and looks 20 years older.

MARY

May I come in?

Reggie pulls the chair out for her.

MARY (CONT'D)

If this is a bad time, I can come back later.

REGGIE

No, please come in.

Mary, glancing around, takes a seat. Reggie can't help but stare at the woman who now seems like a stranger.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

How have you been?

MARY

As good as can be expected.

REGGIE

What's the matter?

MARY

I have a respiratory disease and the doctors say it is probably incurable.

REGGIE

They have no idea what it could be.

MARY

They have given up hope.

Reggie seems to have a lack of words; appearing to be in thought.

REGGIE

The rebellion was terrible. Many British citizens lost their lives. It was good you left when you did.

MARY

It was because of Father O'Brien. He was my savior.

Reggie's demeanor shows he's upset while he squirms in his chair.

REGGIE

Sadly, he passed away in Nepal. I'm so sorry. I know you loved and respected him.

MARY

Why couldn't it have been different? Why did the sepoys rebel?

REGGIE

Hatred of the British. It was going to happen sooner or later.

MARY

What became of Françoise?

REGGIE

She was murdered by brutal savages.

Mary glances down at the floor.

MARY

Father O'Brien and I had so much hope for the natives.

REGGIE

They were misguided. I venture to say we shouldn't dwell on it now.

MARY

What ever happened to Qureshi?

REGGIE

He's dead.

Mary doesn't say anything for a moment.

MARY

Why did you insist on being married to the regiment instead of me?

REGGIE

I was duty-bound to support the regiment. That's what commitment is all about.

MARY

But you completely ignored the business that we so successfully started.

REGGIE

I had no intention of ruining the business. You must understand that.

She looks around the room.

MARY

You seem to be doing well now.

REGGIE

It's an adequate business.

MARY

I wish you would have had the same enthusiasm when we were trying to establish our business in India.

REGGIE

It is of no consequence now.

MARY

How is that servant girl?

REGGIE

Manju is fine. We have a daughter. Her name is Irenna. She will be five soon.

MARY

How nice.

Reggie sits back in his chair with a slight frown.

REGGIE

I'm sorry our marriage didn't last.

Mary stands and shakes her head.

MARY

Father O'Brien once said to me that life doesn't always cooperate with what you want; now I believe he was right.

She turns and walks out the door while Reggie watches her with a sense of pity.

INT. OFFICE OF REGGIE FITZSIMMONS - DAY

In the late afternoon, Reggie is relaxing while reading the latest edition of Punch Magazine. Annette opens the door and strolls in.

ANNETTE

There is a gentleman here to see you.

REGGIE

Who is it?

Reggie stands and smooths the creases in his suit.

ANNETTE

He says his name is Mountcaster and that you know who he is.

Reggie abruptly sits back down.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

What's the matter? Are you all right?

REGGIE

Please give me a moment. Then bring him in.

Several moments later, Mountcaster stands at the door. His appearance is nothing less than shocking. He is thin, scruffy beard, long hair, and shabby clothes.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

I must say, it has been a while.

Mountcaster takes a seat.

MOUNTCASTER

Yes, old chap. It has. You seem to look the same as you did while we were beating the mincemeat out of those hateful sepoys.

REGGIE

How are you getting on?

MOUNTCASTER

As good as can be expected, old chap.

Reggie doesn't respond.

MOUNTCASTER (CONT'D)

I remember when we first met. You wanted to conquer the world.

REGGIE

If you say so.

MOUNTCASTER

You convinced me like a circus magician The Merchant Traders of London was infallible and that there wasn't anything we couldn't do.

REGGIE

That's what I believed.

MOUNTCASTER

But you didn't always make the right decisions, old chap. You hired far too many natives.

REGGIE

It made perfect sense.

MOUNTCASTER

You hired that criminal Qureshi.

REGGIE

It seemed fine at the time.

MOUNTCASTER

He raped your secretary.

REGGIE

You don't know that. It doesn't matter now. Qureshi is dead.

Reggie sits back in his chair.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

What happened to your wife?

MOUNTCASTER

She was distraught, old chap. She took her own life.

REGGIE

Sorry, I didn't know.

Mountcaster leans a little bit forward and smirks.

MOUNTCASTER

We had a certain rapport in India. Do you remember?

REGGIE

I want to know why you took it upon yourself to attempt to ruin my life.

MOUNTCASTER
What do you mean?

REGGIE
You had no reason to arrest me or
Usman for that matter.

MOUNTCASTER
I was only doing my duty. I was
sworn to uphold the tenets of
military justice as an officer.

REGGIE
We did nothing wrong.

MOUNTCASTER
You should never have served. You
seem to forget now as we speak the
importance of following orders.

REGGIE
Why did you have to execute Usman?

Mountcaster stands and paces in front of Reggie's desk.

MOUNTCASTER
I need a job, old chap. As you can
see, I'm down on my luck.

REGGIE
After what you did to me?

MOUNTCASTER
I have no money. Can't even buy a
cup of tea.

Reggie abruptly stands.

REGGIE
I must ask you to leave.

MOUNTCASTER
Very well then.

Mountcaster begins to walk out the door, but turns around.

MOUNTCASTER (CONT'D)
I think you should know I've seen
Qureshi.

REGGIE
That's impossible. I killed him
myself.

MOUNTCASTER

I saw him as plain as day. Two weeks ago.

REGGIE

It can't be him.

MOUNTCASTER

If you say so, old chap.

Mountcaster walks out the door. Reggie appears like he just saw a ghost.

INT. THE FITZSIMMONS KNIGHTSBRIDGE HOME - NIGHT

A week later in the evening, Reggie and Manju sit in the living room talking while Irenna plays with her dollhouse.

MANJU

What should we do for her birthday?

REGGIE

Our home is big enough. We should have a party.

MANJU

I suppose.

She hesitates; watching Irenna play.

MANJU (CONT'D)

Do you ever want to go back to India?

REGGIE

(smiles)

Not as a businessman.

MANJU

I think we should go when Irenna gets a little older.

They hear a loud knock at the door. Reggie goes over and opens it.

Qureshi stands there, defiant and looking desperate and inebriated. He is brandishing a firearm.

REGGIE

How did you know where I live?

QURESHI

Mountcaster told me.

Qureshi forces his way in the home. Reggie backs away and gets closer to Manju and his daughter.

REGGIE

You have no reason to be here. I want you to leave.

QURESHI

Not without Manju.

Qureshi boasts a hideous smile.

QURESHI (CONT'D)

How does it feel seeing someone risen from the dead?

Reggie starts to go toward Qureshi when he fires his gun at Manju and she falls to the ground; blood oozing out of her. Irenna runs into the other room.

Reggie jumps on Qureshi and they begin to fight. Reggie knocks the gun out of Qureshi's hand. He picks it up and shoots Qureshi in the head. He then rushes over to see if he can save Manju's life. It's not to be.

EXT. THE FITZSIMMONS KNIGHTSBRIDGE HOME - NIGHT

An hour later, police offices escort Reggie out of his home in hand cuffs while neighbors look on. The place him in a waiting police carriage and depart the area.

EXT. NEWGATE PRISON - DAY (20 YEARS LATER)

On a rainy morning, Reggie is escorted out of the prison after unbelievably serving his time for murder. He stands and waits for his daughter and her family to take him home.

His thoughts wander.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. GRASSY KNOLL UNDER A TALL BANYAN TREE - DAY

Well before they were imprisoned, Reggie and Usman talk while they smoke cigars.

USMAN

Ever wonder why the British came to India?

REGGIE

That was before our time.

USMAN

I don't think it was for our vast resources, rural countryside, or beautiful women.

REGGIE

I don't follow.

Usman takes a large puff of his cigar.

USMAN

I think it was a need to become something bigger.

Reggie doesn't respond.

USMAN (CONT'D)

Why did you really come here?

REGGIE

To start a business.

USMAN

I think you came here to find your inner soul.

REGGIE

(laughs)

Is that what you think?

USMAN

You're different from the rest.

REGGIE

What do you mean?

USMAN

You were meant to be here.

Reggie gives Usman an inquisitive stare.

USMAN (CONT'D)

Even if it was meant to save one soul.

Usman smiles at Reggie, and Reggie laughs while he pats Usman on the arm; savoring his cigar.

RETURN TO PRESENT

Reggie has a look of contentment on his face as he waits. His daughter and family approach him. They all hug, and then begin to slowly meander down the street.

FADE OUT.

THE END