

Golden Acre
Season 1 Pilot

"Happy Days are Here Again"

written by

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In the interwar years, a playboy heir to the family construction business tries to save his father's dream of an amusement park in the suburbs of Leeds.

EXT. EGYPTIAN VILLAGE, 1916 - DAY

Grains of sand play, form wisps in the zephyr and settle, quiet again.

Pull back to the stationary wheels of a cart, becoming a horse drawn carriage of ammunition boxes, part of a parked convoy of army service corps supply vehicles.

The UNIFORMED MEN sit in the shade of palm trees on the side of what passes for the main road through a small hamlet, with squat white houses dotted nearby.

A dog runs down the street, nose to the ground, before stopping to drop a large curled turd in the sand.

A SUNBURNED YOUNG SOLDIER catches sight of this and watches with a mixture of disgust and fascination.

This is the YOUNG FRANK THOMPSON (19), Wide-eyed and impish rather than blunt handsomeness.

His EYES drop down to THE BOOK IN HIS LAP, mottled by the shade of palm fronds above.

MALE VOICE

(o.s.)

What you got there?

Frank looks to the side and sees a COCKNEY SOLDIER leaning over from the next tree, curious.

Wearily he gets up and walks over to stand over the soldier before handing the book down to him.

SOLDIER

(taking it)

Fuck me, a book!

In The SOLDIERS HANDS, the stained copy of: "The WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ by L. FRANK BAUM" replete with a W.W. Denslow caricature of a lion.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Bum?

THOMPSON

Bow-um.

SOLDIER

Looks like a kiddies book.

As if to make a man of him, the soldier offers Frank a cigarette. A challenge which Frank accepts.

THOMPSON
Very popular in America.

Thompson bends down to light the cigarette on a lit match held by the soldier, cupping his hands.

SOLDIER
So is being a wanker.

Thompson splutters and coughs trying to stifle a laugh. The action sends him reeling away.

As he recovers, the soldier tosses the book back up to him.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)
Well I can't fucking read it can I?

THOMPSON
You swear a lot, don't you?

SOLDIER
Who are you then? Jesus, Lord and fucking Saviour?

Frank silently accepts the argument.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)
What's it about anyway?

THOMPSON
A girl grows up on a farm - a whirlwind takes her to a far away land where she meets a cowardly lion, a tin man and a talking scarecrow.

SOLDIER
You're a fucking loony.

Thomson smiles, drags on the cigarette.

THOMPSON
They all need something - the tin man needs a heart, the scarecrow needs a brain and the lion needs courage, so they go on a quest to find them from a magical wizard.

SOLDIER
So what happens?

THOMPSON
I don't know. I haven't fini--

--BOOM! They both whip round to see an artillery round explode down the street sending a cart flying into a house.

--SHOUTING--WHISTLES--Soldiers scatter in all directions and Thompson bolts away as--

--BOOM! Another shell hits a house near the road. Walls explode in all directions, showering debris, giant sods of earth.

--Frank crashes against the locked front door of a house.

--BOOM! He watches as another shell hits the road eviscerating a horse

--The door opens behind him and he falls into--

INT. EGYPTIAN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

An EGYPTIAN OLD WOMAN inside screams as he picks himself off the floor. She runs past him into the chaos outside.

He watches her through the doorway before--

--BOOM! Another close shell explodes -- the shockwave sends Frank crashing to the floor as dust and sand billows through.

He scrambles up against the wall, curling into a foetal ball as the CRACK of further shells make him flinch and wince.

CU: Frank's terrified face: the child that he still is.

MUSIC CUE - Happy Days are Here Again - Jack Hylton or similar British jazz.

Frank continues to writhe and cower - the sound of his world mutes as the jazz orchestra takes over and continues through to...

INT. GOLDEN ACRES BALLROOM, 1933 - DAY

CU: Palm tree fronds against a high cream-coloured wall stencilled cheaply with Moroccan motifs.

The many sparkles of a glitter ball gently sail over the surface of the wall and tree.

An OLDER FRANK THOMPSON (36) stares at the tree, lit cigarette in hand poised to smoke but held steady.

Close on A GRAMAPHONE NEEDLE as it races through the grooves of shellac disc.

The music echoes through a LARGE BALLROOM that is decorated on the sides by a series of tall artificial palm trees. The walls are panelled to resemble Moroccan archways and columns. The effect is cheesy but not un-exotic.

The gramophone arm lifts automatically at the end of the song. The sound of the machine breaks Frank from his daydream but he stays in the silence for a moment, finally taking a drag from the cigarette.

FEMALE VOICE

(OFF)

What the hell are you doing in here?

Frank turns to see a fraught woman in a day suit, spectacles and briefcase steaming full speed towards him. This is ALICE THOMPSON (29), Frank's sister and manager of Golden Acre.

ALICE

(arriving in front of him)

Is it possible you could see your way clear to doing any bloody work today?

FRANK

I'm surveying the ballroom.

ALICE

You're hiding from me.

Frank banged to rights - it's true. He leaps up to walk the length of the dancefloor to the gramophone by the stage. Alice valiantly trails in his wake.

ALICE (CONT'D)

The ladies' loos by the kiosk are not going to be ready.

FRANK

Don't be silly; ladies don't use the loo -

ALICE

There's a crack - somewhere - water everywhere. And we're still waiting on the new boats.

FRANK

The plane will take up some of the lake. We'll need fewer boats anyway.

ALICE

No ticket paper!

FRANK

Once they're in, it doesn't matter.

They reach the gramophone - Frank goes to turn the record over...

ALICE

You're in here playing with your ruddy toys.

FRANK

Now don't lie, you love Jack Hylton.

Alice holds out a CREAM ENVELOPE - official looking.

ALICE

And this arrived.

He leaves the record. Frank looks at the envelope but won't touch.

ALICE (CONT'D)

If you don't mind my saying, it has the stench of something distinctly unwelcome about it.

She thrusts it at him again. Surrendering, he takes it and looks at the addressed side:

INSERT - ENVELOPE

"Mr Frank Thompson, Herbert Thompson and Sons, c/o Alice Thompson, Golden Acre, Otley Road, Bramhope, Leeds"

The top edge of the envelope is stamped severely in two places: "Private" in red ink and "Mr Terrance Quance L.L.M. Solicitors" in black.

BACK TO SCENE

He sneaks a look at Alice before slipping it inside his suit jacket, unopened.

ALICE (CONT'D)

I don't like surprises, Frank.

He smiles, before returning to the gramophone.

FRANK

I genuinely don't know what it could be.

ALICE
 (exasperated)
 Then why not find out?

He drops the needle onto the disc and spins back to her.

FRANK
 Where would be the fun in that?

The gramophone leaps into life with a comedy uptempo number.
 "Egyptian Ella" by Jack Hylton or similar.

ALICE
 You have fun. I have to do all the
 work.

Frank grabs her in a dance hold and starts to move her around
 in a fumbled attempt at a quickstep.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 (reluctant)
 What - ? Bugger off with you.

FRANK
 We are in the show business.

ALICE
 You're spending too much money. Did
 you see the timber invoices?

His leading of her becomes frantic - she has to follow in
 order to remain on her feet. In between talking to her, he
 sings along with the comedy lyrics.

FRANK
 My dreams are priceless.

ALICE
 You have the luxury of dreaming.

FRANK
 (Histrionic parody)
 And what do you dream of, 'my dear'?

Frank whirls her around like a dervish - stepping on her toes
 so she yelps in pain. They separate.

ALICE
 Bloody hell.

FRANK
 Sorry.

A humble silence.

ALICE

The bank is asking for a meeting next week.

FRANK

I have to go.

ALICE

What? Where are you off to now?

FRANK

The shelter. The ceremony.

ALICE

That's not till two.

FRANK

There are other errands to attend.

Alice turns and marches away. Frank starts after her.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Alice!

ALICE

Sod off!

FRANK

I'll be back this evening. I'll pitch in then. I will! I have to meet with Eggleswick. You talk about the money, well, he's part of that equation. There's the councillors. The clergy! I get their support we can start to serve booze finally.

She stops and whips round on him.

ALICE

I am glad of it, Frank, because I could do with a stiff drink right about now, and it's only ten in the morning.

FRANK

I'll join you. With a licence, the dance evenings take off.

ALICE

It'll take more than that. What errands, anyway?

FRANK
Things.

ALICE
What things?

FRANK
Errands.

ALICE
Always a mystery, isn't it? And in amongst all your many errands, do you think you might finally pay Dad a visit?

FRANK
(instantly taciturn)
If I get time.

ALICE
You haven't been. Since Christmas. I have to look after him as well, do I?

No reply. Alice has her answer and turns, disappointed.

ALICE (CONT'D)
(over her shoulder)
Just a little bloody gardening, that's all.

FRANK
-Lily's ill again.

She stops.

FRANK (CONT'D)
She's been in bed all week. Doctor's with her this morning.

ALICE
Oh. I am sorry.

She closes in on him.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Still. You need to see him. I think it would do you good.

FRANK
It won't change anything.

He sulks a little, head bowed. She resists the urge to mother him. Instead...

ALICE
Did you want to see the plane?

FRANK
(suddenly beaming)
It's here?

MUSIC CUE: The music from the gramophone swells over...

EXT. GOLDEN ACRE PARK - DAY

Frank and Alice emerge from the ballroom into GOLDEN ACRE - a Coney-Island inspired amusement park couched around a VERY LARGE BOATING LAKE.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE:

Alice and Frank wind their way through some of the attractions in the empty park:

-A kiosk cafe with outdoor seating.

-Wooden swing boats

-A wooden go-kart track

-A replica wooden pirate galleon

-A 'music tower' in the form of a mock Tudor pagoda sitting on a man-made promontory jutting out onto the lake

-a water chute

-motor launches and dodge'em boats

All set in spring-flowered gardens with daffodils and tulips in shaped beds. Builders, joiners, cleaners and other workers are busy carrying supplies and working on the rides.

END OF MONTAGE.

Running its way through all of this - a MINIATURE STEAM TRAIN, driven by a grey haired man in cap and overalls.

This is SYDNEY AMBLE, (48) the officious and unsmiling driver. Seeing Alice and Frank race past, he stops the train near them and jumps off to give chase.

SYDNEY
Mister Thompson!

ALICE
Sid, we're on our way over -

SYDNEY
 (Catching up)
 Mister Thompson!

FRANK
 Mister Amble!

SYDNEY
 I'm still without another driver,
 sir!

FRANK
 No-one can match your expertise,
 Mister Amble!

ALICE
 I'm setting up interviews -

SYDNEY
 I'll drop dead if it's anything
 like the last season.

Frank suddenly stops and rest his hands on Sydney's shoulders

FRANK
 You'll receive a viking funeral on
 the lake!

SYDNEY
 You're a humorous man, Mr Thompson
 but -

FRANK
 You are the keystone of Golden
 Acre, Mr Amble -

SYDNEY
 - Well, that's very kind of you,
 but -

FRANK
 - And we will find you your batman,
 believe me.

Frank rushes off with Sydney still in tow. Alice stares on
 indignant before launching off after.

CUT TO:

Further along the path, Frank is flanked by VIOLET BEDDINGTON
 (36), all high hair and austerity, manager of the kiosk cafe.

VIOLET

Mr Thompson, I'm glad I've caught you.

FRANK

Violet, I couldn't run fast enough if I tried.

ALICE

(catching up to Sydney)
What about Henry from the boats?

VIOLET

I think the staff and I feel very strongly that these new paper napkins -

ALICE

Couldn't he -
(turning to Frank)
Sorry, when did you order - ?

VIOLET

- Well, they just won't do, Mr Thompson.

FRANK

Latest thing from America.

SYDNEY

Wouldn't know his arse from his elbow.

ALICE

Imported?
(to Frank)
What?

VIOLET

Well, that's as maybe but they just simply fall apart at the sight of a spill of tea.

SYDNEY

(to Alice)
Henry just won't do either.

FRANK

(Spotting someone off)
Bill!

Frank presses on with Sydney giving chase. Alice rests a hand on Violet to stop her.

ALICE
How many do we currently have?

VIOLET
I was just saying to Mr Thompson -

ALICE
How many?

VIOLET
Well, boxes and boxes of them.
Enough for the whole season, I
should wager. We might be able to
palm them off to the Boathouse at
Roundhay. I'll tell Mr Thompson -

ALICE
- Mr Thompson will be away all of
today.

VIOLET
Oh. Well. I'll catch up with him
later.

Violet stalks off, leaving Alice fuming.

ALICE
(under her breath)
But I'm the bloody manager!

CUT TO:

Further along, Frank stops to greet BILL MADELEY (35), sinewy
and strong jawed, capable but with a furrowed brow.

FRANK
Dare I catch you on a break?

BILL
I'm off to build a house for once.

FRANK
You're not finished here, surely?

BILL
Yes, I am. If I stay longer, you'll
have me build something else.

FRANK
I want a zoo.

BILL
If they put you in it, I'll
consider.

Alice and the rest catch up.

BILL (CONT'D)
Is everything in order, Miss
Thompson?

ALICE
Finally, someone talking to me for
once.

FRANK
(sotto voce to Bill)
Run!

ALICE
No, Bill. I'm afraid I have a list
of jobs as long as your arm.

BILL
Well, that will be overtime, Miss
Thompson.

ALICE
Not a problem, I'm sure Mr Thompson
will oblige.

FRANK
(To Violet)
The paper napkins stay.
(to Sydney)
Sid, I'm sure Bill here will fill
in as best he can here and there.

Bill gives Frank a dirty look before acquiescing.

BILL
(to Sydney)
I'll come over and you can show me
how to work the engine.

SYDNEY
Right you are, Bill.

VIOLET
Thank you, Mr Thompson.

Sydney and Violet depart vaguely satisfied.

BILL
(to Frank)
Have you seen it?

ALICE
 (to Bill)
 We were very much on our way.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHORE OF THE BIG POND - DAY

Frank, Alice and Bill stand in front of the SUPERMARINE S6B - shining aluminium seaplane nestled on a launching trolley on the landing slip of the boating lake.

The sun glints off the blue and silver livery, the sleek fuselage and streamlined design are the height of modernity.

Alice stares at it agape - a spiritual moment. Frank notices her reaction and takes note.

BILL
 Not bad is that. What did it do again?

ALICE
 The Schneider Trophy. Four hundred and fifteen miles an hour. A new world record.

FRANK
 Amelia Earhart here.

ALICE
 Pardon?
 (Seeing his reaction)
 What?

FRANK
 The ladies' loos are still wanting.

BILL
 I'll have a look at them.

ALICE
 Of course you will.
 (turning to the men)
 You'll have to save this whole bloody adventure before we're through I expect. Because he'll drive us into the ground and I ...will have flown away in this - beautiful - thing.

FRANK

Baggy I get the first ride. Opening day.

ALICE

You always do. It was just the same at Coney Island.

Frank kisses her on the cheek.

FRANK

I have to go.

He marches off as Alice and Bill watch him leave.

BILL

What's wrong with the ladies toilets?

ALICE

You were in the war, weren't you?

Smiling, she turns and departs.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO GOLDEN ACRE - DAY

Frank strides purposefully out of the turnstile entrance gate and straight into a waiting car with driver.

Crane up to see a LARGE LETTER SIGN sitting on the roof of the turnstiles:

"GOLDEN ACRE"

Beyond, the vista of the empty park, the static rides and the expansive lake beyond, glistening in the sunshine.

TITLES.

EXT. FRANK'S HOUSE - DAY

Frank's limousine pulls off the road onto an ornate drive leading up a large, what would be 'new build' house.

The car reaches the entrance and he steps out from the back, hesitating briefly before stepping up to the front door

INT. RECEPTION, FRANK'S HOUSE - DAY

Frank enters the reception area to a well-appointed but silent home.

He looks left and right into the ground floor rooms but sees nothing - sensing a presence on the first floor, he climbs the grand staircase.

INT. FIRST FLOOR LANDING, FRANK'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

He arrives to see a black-suited man with a bag backing out of a bedroom at the far end, quietly pulling the door to. This is DOCTOR SAMUELS (40s), the air of an undertaker, someone who has mislaid his Hippocratic oath.

As he turns to leave, he spots Frank and stops.

FRANK

What have we discovered?

The doctor glances to the door before closing in on Frank, and lowering his voice, as if in confidence.

SAMUELS

Nothing...discernible...It may very well be attributable to mere women's problems. Nervous exhaustion...

FRANK

So...?

SAMUELS

Continued rest -

FRANK

- She does very little as it is.

SAMUELS

- and patience. She will probably rally before too long. Call me if she stays in bed any longer than tomorrow.

The doctor brushes past to descend the stairs. Frank eyes the closed door ruefully.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, FRANK'S HOUSE - DAY

Frank sits on a chair by the dressing table at the foot of a large ornate bed, occupied by an unknown figure, turned away from the world.

The daylight claws at the edges of the curtain but the room is in darkness, save for a dim lamp on the dressing table.

Frank tries a few opening gambits in his head before...

FRANK
Alice says hello.

Not even a rustling of the bedclothes.

FRANK (CONT'D)
She's got her hands full at the
minute, I can tell you...The ladies
loos by the kiosk are - Well -
you'll not need to know that now,
will you?

CU: The wretched face of LILY HARLING (30), Frank's wife. Eyes
shining open in the gloom as she lies on her side, listening.

FRANK (CONT'D)
(o.s.)
I wish you could see it: the park,
Lil. It's going to be even better
this season, I know it is. The
seaplane arrived - gorgeous!

Back to Frank.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I shan't stay. I've got to go to the
opening. It was in the diary. I'm
sure they'll understand if you're
not well. I'll be back later.

He fiddles with his hat in his hands.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I don't hate you, Lil.

CU on Lily's face as it trembles and creases in silent sobs.

Frank stands, thinks he hears something, before leaving.

CU on Lily's face, mouth open, about to let rip.

INT. CAFE, LEEDS CITY CENTRE - DAY

A smartly dressed young woman sits at table with a cup of tea
talking across to an unseen other. This is **MAY SOMMERS** (24),
whose expensive clothes don't entirely fit her petite frame.

MAY
Do you go to the picture house? I
don't go regularly mind but I do
enjoy it.

(MORE)

MAY (CONT'D)

Of course, I love musicals. Did you see "Goodnight, Vienna"? Anna Neagle is - she was working a stage show in Liverpool when Jack Buchannon found her - I think she's wonderful. Has your Jack played with Jack? Have you played with him? Buchannon?

UNSEEN MALE

Not while I've been there.

MAY

He's got a lovely voice, 'an't he? You say you don't go to the pictures?

UNSEEN MALE

Not often, no.

MAY

I was passing by the Queen's Theatre, do you know the Queen's?

The unseen male is finally viewed, relaxed back in his chair, lighting a cigarette. This is GORDON PAGET (29), brow so heavy with cynicism he finds it hard to raise.

PAGET

(cigarette in mouth)

I know the Queen's. It used to be a theatre, now it's a cinema. I played shows at the Queen's. Before they turned it into a cinema.

MAY

They had the bill for that new American picture. "King Kong". Enormous great ape on it, bigger than the city itself. Holding on to buildings and being attacked by planes. Got some poor woman in his paw.

PAGET

Is that right?

MAY

Now who'd want to see that, I ask you.

PAGET

Not me.

MAY

What does that monkey want with her, I should like to know?

An unanswered question that even Paget dare not answer.

PAGET

Jack sends his sincerest apologies that he cannot be here in person.

MAY

You heard about me from - ?

PAGET

- George Ackerson is a patron of City Varieties.

MAY

I don't think I know him.

PAGET

He was at a function Jack Hylton attended. Said that you had sung in the Friday show -

MAY

Only a couple of occasions.

PAGET

It certainly made an impression.

MAY

I'm flattered.

A compulsory smile smears across Paget's face.

PAGET

I'm Jack's...sort of scout. Looking out for the next - Anna Neagle. Jack loved recording with Phyllis Robins.

MAY

Mad about the Boy.

PAGET

I was in Birmingham yesterday rehearsing with - someone called Mavis. No good, I'm afraid.

MAY

So you play in the band?

PAGET

Of course.

MAY

It's just - and I adore Jack's music - I was watching The Magic Box newsreel - in the cinema -

PAGET

(anticipating)

- I was at the piano. If you remember. I was turned away from the camera.

May almost bows in deference to his expertise. Paget looks at his watch.

PAGET (CONT'D)

We should be cracking on.

EXT. OUTSIDE KIOSK LADIES TOILETS, GOLDEN ACRE - DAY

Bill emerges from the toilets to face a waiting Alice.

ALICE

Are we doomed?

BILL

Cracked. You'll have to order more porcelain.

ALICE

How long - do you think?

BILL

Not before opening, I shouldn't think.

Alice groans without decorum.

BILL (CONT'D)

You could just close the stall off.

ALICE

It's not a good look.

BILL

It'll be right after a week.

ALICE

How are you so calm?

BILL
I was in the war, remember?

ALICE
And yet you've never faced anything
like this.

BILL
I don't think anyone has. You know
he's a bloody madman with all this.

Alice turns and walks away.

ALICE
(over her shoulder)
I don't follow you. We're in our
second triumphant season.

BILL
There's no trams. It's miles out
and an arm and a leg for most folk
to come here. Everyone says so.

ALICE
Don't you have dreams, Mr Madeley?

BILL
If I could afford them I would.

Alice turns back on him.

ALICE
You know you were a lot more
charming when you had your head
near the W.C.

BILL
I build houses. They're the
dreams people want. Somewhere to
live. Families.

ALICE
Is it? Not your dream, apparently.

BILL
Nor yours. I've noticed.

ALICE
(stung)
Only my brother gets the time for
romance. Or whatever he does.

FEMALE VOICE

(off)

Miss Thompson!

ALICE turns to see a young woman waving in the distance. It is IRIS GREEN (22), office secretary, plucky and enthused.

IRIS

You have a visitor!

Alice turns back to Bill - unfinished business between them.

ALICE

No rest for the wicked.

She walks away with a smile.

INT. PARK MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Alice walks and sees Iris at her desk, who grins widely and wordlessly nods to the chair opposite.

Alice turns to discover a relaxed and elegant PETER BUXTON (29), sitting on a chair in the single room office.

ALICE

Mr. Buxton?

BUXTON

(Standing)

Good morning. I was rather expecting -

ALICE

- Mr Thompson will be away for the rest of the day. I'm Alice Thompson, park manager.

He accepts her hand to shake with a schoolboy grin.

BUXTON

Of course. I mean ... yes.

ALICE

You've come from the Evening Post, I presume, to snap our seaplane.

BUXTON

And a few lines of profile. A portrait of Mr Thompson: successful local business man, film producer, the dream of bringing a slice of America's Coney Island to our shores.

ALICE

... Well, as I say, Mr Thompson is at the opening of the Veteran's Shelter on Woodhouse Moor. But you'll find I know Mr Thompson's dream well enough.

She starts for the exit, expecting Buxton to follow.

ALICE (CONT'D)

I damn well curate the bloody thing for him.

EXT. OUTSIDE CHURCHYARD, SUBURBAN LEEDS - DAY

Frank's car sits with the engine off.

CUT TO:

On the back seat, Frank sits quietly, looking out of the window into the churchyard.

FRANK

(to driver, without breaking his gaze)
What time is it?

DRIVER

(off)
Twelve thirty, sir.

FRANK

...Drive around.

INT. AUDITORIUM, CITY VARIETIES - DAY

POV: The empty red seats of the gilded auditorium of the music hall, tall and narrow. The ghosts of audience.

CU: May's face gazing out. Her reverie is disturbed by--

Paget coughs and tinkles the ivories of the piano by the footlights.

MAY

I expect you've played here a few times haven't you?

PAGET

Surprisingly, no. My first time. How'd you arrange this?

MAY

My friend and I take that box there. Albert Hayes knows us very well, so I asked him if we could use it.

PAGET

Lucky old you. Who's your friend?

MAY

Frank Thompson.

PAGET

Not heard of him.

MAY

He builds houses. Produces films. Runs an amusement park up near Bramhope.

PAGET

Amusement park? Like - Blackpool?

MAY

Yes, but it's going to be - bigger.

PAGET

Gosh!

MAY

I know. He's very fond of entertainment.

PAGET

A lover of the Arts. Well we all need those, don't we?

May is unable to process sarcasm.

PAGET (CONT'D)

He sounds rich.

But now she detects something unsavoury in his comments.

PAGET (CONT'D)

Is he?

He stares at her too long. She shrugs his gaze off vaguely before...

MAY

The dancers come to rehearse in an hour so...

PAGET

(feigned apology, taking to piano)

Of course. Absolutely. Let's have a listen.

EXT. VETERAN'S SHELTER, WOODHOUSE MOOR- DAY

Frank's car drives along the main road that bisects the park overlooking the city...

The car pulls up alongside other cars, parked within sight of THE VETERAN'S SHELTER - a short walk from the road.

It's a pristine but squat mock tudor hexagonal building, topped with a stubby clock tower.

A sizeable and formal crowd is gathered in the orbit of the new build. Ribbons decorate the gables.

POV: From the back seat, Frank watches a tall black-pinstriped unsmiling man walk down to the car to collect him.

He sighs briefly before turning the handle on the car door.

Outside: Frank steps out to shake the man's hand. This is DAVID EGGLESWICK (51), partner in Golden Acre Estates Ltd, a granite-faced tower launched from his own bootstraps.

EGGLESWICK

Just in time.

FRANK

Almost exactly in fact.

An underlying disrespect. Frank breaks the stalemate by nodding to the shelter.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Bill's boys did a grand job.

EGGLESWICK

I'm surprised he's not here. Or has he got umpteen jobs to finish off, I suppose.

FRANK

You know how these things are.

They turn to walk towards the crowd

EGGLESWICK

Bill's a good man.

FRANK

The best.

EGGLESWICK

But it's not like snagging houses,
Frank.

FRANK

If they're the charmless boxes that
you build, no. I expect they're
very simple to remedy. Ambition
comes with a little risk, David.

EGGLESWICK

Well, if it were just your money,
I'd grant you that one. The first
season was disappointing.

FRANK

You're forgetting the ballroom.

EGGLESWICK

You'll need an alcohol licence to
make that - interesting.

Frank stops, disgruntled.

FRANK

That was supposed to be why we
built this - to curry favour.

EGGLESWICK

Oh, that's just the start.

Frank watches a group of dignitaries approach, led by the
mayor with his ceremonial chains.

EGGLESWICK (CONT'D)

Your father couldn't stick most of
them. But he knew their uses.
Incidentally, you are a paid up
member of the party, aren't you?

FRANK

Which one?

EGGLESWICK

Very funny, Frank. That's a good
'un, is that.

EXT. SHORE OF THE BIG POND, GOLDEN ACRE - DAY

Iris and Alice watch from behind as Buxton sets up his tripod in front of the aircraft. Iris assesses Buxton's arse, Alice stares at the plane.

IRIS

That is very impressive.

ALICE

Wait until we put it in the water.

Iris sniggers - Alice double-takes before she realises.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Oh for goodness' sake-

IRIS

That would also be something.

ALICE

-Honestly.

Buxton hears their laughter and turns around. They fail to act natural.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Shh! Erm, do you have everything
you need, Mr Buxton?

IRIS

Would you like a cup of tea?

He smiles, waves the offer away - back to framing shot.

BUXTON

No, thank you, I'm fine.

IRIS

(sotto voce)
Absolutely you are.

Alice slaps her playfully on the shoulder as Bill suddenly appears behind them.

BILL

Everything alright?

Iris starts with a yelp, Alice whips round.

BILL (CONT'D)
What's going on here then?

IRIS
Nothing!

ALICE
Dream making.

BILL
Your dream or hers?

IRIS
Oooh!

Seeing Bill is not joining in, she sobers up at a stroke.

ALICE
Iris, Mr Buxton might not want tea,
but I'm gasping.

IRIS
Hmmm? Oh. Of course. Be back in a
jiffy.

She dashes off. Bill and Iris alone yet again.

BILL
I've managed to find you some new
porcelain.

ALICE
Wonderful.

BILL
There was an over-order at our site
up at Adel. The lads can take the
van and have it over here this
afternoon if need be.

ALICE
I know what Frank would want.

BILL
Oh, but what do you want?

She affects to consider this before abandoning the joke...

ALICE
I think I want it this afternoon.

A smile. Bill laughs too. Something is going on.

BILL
Right you are.

ALICE
Off you pop then.

She turns and almost skips over to Buxton. He watches her talk to another man, animated, vivacious, before remembering his quest, slips away.

EXT. VETERAN'S SHELTER, WOODHOUSE MOOR- DAY

By the shelter now, Frank is surrounded by various guests in a claustrophobic throng.

CU: Short austere woman with brimmed hat and glasses is in Frank's face.

AUSTERE WOMAN
Of course, Mr Thompson, you will be sure to make reference in your speech to the accessibility of the shelter to all parties.

Frank is clearly overwhelmed.

FRANK
I beg your pardon?

THE MAYOR, close by, steps in and intervenes.

MAYOR
You'll not have met Councillor Hart, Mr Thompson.

Frank shakes the hand of BRIDGET HART, Labour councillor (42)

FRANK
A pleasure, I'm -

A portly man with moustache joins the fray. This is AMOS GARDINER (37), Conservative councillor.

GARDINER
Now, Bidy, Mr Thompson is perfectly aware of the agreement -

HART
I'm only ensuring that any passing citizens are not under any misapprehension -

EGGLESWICK

I'm sure they won't be -

HART

--that the public goods of the park
are not to be segregated for the
use *only* of our esteemed veterans -

MAYOR

(Over the top, to Frank,
taking him by the arm)
Speaking of which, may I introduce
you to our guests of honour?

He pulls Frank away while the argument continues...

GARDINER

As if you give two hoots about the
veterans, Bridget, your brother was
a deserter -

HART

--Excuse me, sir, conscientious
objector and served his time -

CUT TO:

Frank stands opposite TWO VETERANS next to the shelter. One
sits on a bench, whilst the other is in a heavy wheelchair.

Frank notices that the man on the bench is missing a leg,
covered by a clumsily hemmed trouser. He appears standoffish,
while the man in the wheelchair seems mentally absent.

MAYOR

(pointing along in turn)
May I introduce our brave veterans?

Frank shakes the hands of the first, GORDON FAIRDALE (30s) an
but JOHN HILL (30s) in the wheelchair does not respond,
leaving Frank to awkwardly retract his hand.

FAIRDALE

Don't mind him. He's a little
tired, bless him.

Frank silently affirms.

MAYOR

Mr Thompson served himself, you
know.

FAIRDALE

Oh aye? Where?

FRANK
Egypt. Army Service Corps.

FAIRDALE
(with a knowing smile)
Right! Old Ally Sloper's Cavalry.

FRANK
(Not smiling)
The very same.

FAIRDALE
Well then. Good for you, son. Good
for you.

Frank is stung but not surprised by this contempt.

MAYOR
What do you men think of the tea
shelter? Mr Thompson's men spent
some effort on it.

FAIRDALE
Oh, it's grand, aye. Mind you, I
don't drink a lot of tea these
days. It tends to go right though
me, if you know what I mean. Smell
of piss tends to put you off your
sandwiches.

MAYOR
Sir! There is -

FAIRDALE
My apologies Mr Thompson. I have
been told you have been very
generous. And it's a day out, in't
it? That's what they said before
they wheeled us out.

Fairdale's eyes burrow into the Mayor, who feels it.

FAIRDALE (CONT'D)
I look forward to your speech. But
you'll understand why I can't give
you a standing ovation, won't you?

Fairdale slumps back in his seat. The audience is over.

MAYOR
(gesturing To gathered
crowd)
Well. Shall we?

FRANK
Yes. On with the show.

INT. AUDITORIUM, CITY VARIETIES - DAY

May stands on the stage singing a slower romantic song - "What More Can I Ask?" or similar - while Paget accompanies on the piano.

She is very competent but finds the higher notes difficult and starts to become pitchy. Distressed, she stops Paget.

MAY
I'm so sorry.

PAGET
Not at all. That note is a real bugger isn't it?

MAY
I've never - sorry!

PAGET
Shall we go from a little before?

Paget plays the difficult passage again. May frowns her way through the lead up. Once again, the note is bad, she almost convulses in distress.

PAGET (CONT'D)
And again?

She tries but the result is the same.

MAY
I don't think it's going to happen.

PAGET
Nonsense! Here we go-

MAY
-Wait.

PAGET
-And..

Intent, he plays the section but May warbles and croaks before wailing and darting off into the wings ...

Paget pauses alone in the empty theatre, then lights a cigarette, which he drags before checking his watch.

EXT. VETERAN'S SHELTER, WOODHOUSE MOOR- DAY

The dignitaries stand facing out to a gathered audience. The Mayor has already started speaking.

MAYOR

Mr Frank Thompson and the auspices of Golden Acre Estates have been instrumental in the design and implementation of this magnificent shelter. Many of you will remember his father Herbert Thompson, who served this city for many years.

Frank remembers.

MAYOR (CONT'D)

Now Mr Thompson the Younger has taken over the family business of construction. He has also gifted the city with the unusual addition of a first class American-style amusement park up at Bramhope, now embarking on its second season. I'm reliably informed that the addition of the Coconut Grove ballroom this year, will bring a touch of Hollywood sparkle to proceedings.

Frank dips his head self-consciously. Eggleswick grimaces.

MAYOR (CONT'D)

Mr Thompson!

Good natured applause from the crowd. Frank steps forward to replace the mayor.

FRANK

Your worship, councillors, Ladies and Gentlemen and our honoured veterans...

He glances over and sees the unsmiling faces of Fairdale and the others.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Many of you have made clear your respect and admiration of my late father, and for that I humbly thank you. As you rightly mentioned, your worship - we all owe a great debt to him but, of course, mine is the greatest of all -

He stops for a moment, briefly touches the inside of his jacket.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Like my father, I hold in the
 highest esteem the sacrifices made
 by our Great War soldiers, many of
 whom did not return. It is in ...

He trails off again, glancing at Fairdale again, whose EYES penetrate him --

--FLASHBACK: EGYPTIAN VILLAGE, 1916

The young Frank picks himself up from the floor of the village house and stumbles slowly to the front door. Opening the door, the desert sunlight is blinding.

--BACK TO SCENE

FRANK (CONT'D)
 -It is in his honour, that I was
 privileged to help provide this
 modest shelter to provide ...

--BACK TO FLASHBACK

Frank wanders out of the front door and into the ruins of the parked convoy as a stunned survivor.

SMOKE blows across the chaos of obliterated wagons and scorched rubble. Bodies of men and horses litter the road far into the distance.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 (V.O.)
 ...comfort...and...erm...refuge.

-- BACK TO SCENE

Frank face blanches. His hand ducks inside his jacket once more, massages his chest. His - breath - shortens.

POV: Fairdale's eyes upon him.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 And I know ... that... excuse me
 ... if he were here today...

--BACK TO FLASHBACK

CU: Frank's face as he stares at the devastation then focuses down on something in the near distance at ground level.

POV: A BODY in the road ahead, lying on its back with its head furthest away from Frank and arms stretched outwards in a crucifix-like position.

--BACK TO SCENE

Frank collapses on the ground clutching his chest. The gathered crowd contracts around him.

INT. AUDITORIUM, CITY VARIETIES - DAY

Paget stubs a cigarette out in an ashtray on top of the piano. At the same time, May emerges sheepishly from the wings onto the stage.

MAY

I am so very sorry.

PAGET

Not at all. Don't be silly.

MAY

That's never happened to me before.

PAGET

Happens to the best of us, I assure you.

MAY

Except that it has happened to me before.

PAGET

Well. I've had my moments.

MAY

I find that hard to believe.

PAGET

No, it's true. Not often, but...

MAY

You're very kind.

Paget looks to escape.

PAGET

Listen, regrettably I have to catch the afternoon -

MAY

Of course, you must be so busy.

PAGET

Quite. But erm... thank you.

He stands up and approaches the stage.

PAGET (CONT'D)

Your voice is ... just wonderful.
Truly.

MAY

Mr Paget -

PAGET

No, really. I'm sure you've got
something there that I am sure Jack
would be very interested in -

MAY

(snappy)

Mr Paget! It's nonsense... what
you're saying. With the best will
in the world, isn't it?

Paget tries hard to hide it, but is easily read.

MAY (CONT'D)

I made a right mess of it. I always
do, when it matters. I just can't
seem to make it happen. So. I
genuinely thank you for considering
me, and for coming all this way.
And let's leave it at that.

He knows he's been rumbled.

PAGET

Well. Then I really should be
going. Perhaps another time?

He reaches forward to shake her hand.

PAGET (CONT'D)

Cheerio.

He turns and leaves through the stalls entrance. May is left
alone in the auditorium.

It takes a moment or two but it's not long before she finds
it hard not to cry. Alone, she has to soothe herself.

EXT. SHORE OF THE BIG POND, GOLDEN ACRE - DAY

Alice stands next to the S6B while Buxton frames her in his camera at a distance.

ALICE
Are you sure that this is
completely necessary?

BUXTON
I need a representative from the
park for the picture. Could you
smile for me?

Alice smiles weakly. Buxton takes a picture.

BUXTON (CONT'D)
And maybe point up to the cockpit?

Alice obliges.

BUXTON (CONT'D)
That's wonderful, thank you.

He clicks the shutter, while looking directly at her.

BUXTON (CONT'D)
And just bring your other hand down
to your hip for me?

Alice is more hesitant.

BUXTON (CONT'D)
And twist your leg there so it sort
of comes across your standing leg.

Alice ends up as an awkward Magician's assistant.

ALICE
And what will the caption for this
be, Mr Buxton?

He takes the snap.

BUXTON
Do you think you could take your
spectacles off?

She does, struggling to find a place in her outfit for them.

ALICE
This is ridiculous.

BUXTON
Trust me, I think this will appeal
to our readers.

BILL appears behind him.

BILL
I didn't know the Evening Post was
that kind of magazine.

Surprised, Buxton starts to pack away. Alice wanders over.

BUXTON
Female pilots are very much the
fashion.

ALICE
Amelia Earhart.

BUXTON
Precisely.

BILL
You're going up in that thing?

ALICE
No.

BUXTON
I think I have enough now, in any
case.

ALICE
Yes, thank you, Mr Buxton. Perhaps
if you make your way back to the
office we can finish off there?

Buxton gives a perfunctory nod to Bill as he goes. Alice
pulls at her skirt, adjusts her jacket as she arrives at
Bill's side.

ALICE (CONT'D)
All going to plan?

BILL
Absolutely. Just waiting on the
lads to come back with the van and
then I'll get to it.

ALICE
So you thought you'd spend your
time looking after me, is that it?

BILL

You look like you have everything in hand. I was just waiting for you to pull a rabbit out of his hat.

ALICE

There's nothing wrong with a little glamour.

BILL

Is that right?

ALICE

Not that you'd know anything about that.

BILL

I don't think he had Hollywood in mind. More Holbeck. Working Men's Club.

ALICE

That's our clientele. I'm clearly in the right place.

BILL

Not at chucking out time on a Friday night, I'll wager.

ALICE

You'd be surprised where I might end up. But for now, I have a job to do. As do you. Mr Madeley.

She doesn't move, unsmiling. Bill's smile drops as he realises this is his cue to walk away.

EXT. VETERAN'S SHELTER, WOODHOUSE MOOR - DAY

Frank recovers his breathing seated on the bench, with the Mayor and others, including Eggleswick, standing over him.

Turning, he realises Fairdale is sitting next to him on the bench, still scrutinising with his eyes.

A WOMAN hands The Mayor a cup of tea with saucer, who then presses it into Frank's hands.

FRANK

(breathy)

Thank you.

MAYOR

We've summoned a doctor.

FRANK

Oh. No, that's not necessary, I assure you.

GARDINER

You were very pale, sir. And pains in your chest, mind.

EGGLESWICK steps between the crowd and Frank and addresses them.

EGGLESWICK

Perhaps if we can give Mr Thompson some room to breathe?

MAYOR

Quite so. We'll start the reception inside. Take your time Mr Thompson.

Almost disappointed, the crowd starts to disperse. Fairdale lights a cigarette on the bench next Frank. The Mayor stands as if waiting for the veteran.

FAIRDALE

(exhaling, the man don't give a fuck)

I think I'll stay here, if you don't mind.

Not about to argue, the Mayor departs. Eggleswick looks furious but the presence of the veteran mutes him.

EGGLESWICK

(loaded)

Why didn't you tell me you were ill?

FRANK

I didn't know.

Eggleswick shakes his head and joins the others. Frank is left alone with Fairdale on the bench, who takes a long puff.

FAIRDALE

It's not a heart attack.

FRANK

I beg your pardon.

FAIRDALE leans in, offers him a cigarette, which Frank takes.

FAIRDALE

There's the quickening of the pulse, aye. But you're still here, aren't you? There's the pain -
 (taps his own chest)
 Right there. And you claw at it, and claw at it because if you can reach it maybe you can stop it...

FRANK

Stop what?

FAIRDALE

Your world coming to an end.

Frank looks like someone has shown him a card trick.

FAIRDALE (CONT'D)

Sound familiar?

FRANK

Yes. You?

FAIRDALE

(even closer)
 Every fucking night, before I fall asleep. If I fall asleep.

He takes out a hip flask from his inside jacket pocket, unscrews it.

FAIRDALE (CONT'D)

Only thing that helps. Worth pissing myself for.

He sips at it before offering to Frank who looks around before taking it and swigging.

FRANK

When will it end?

FAIRDALE

(laughs)
 Bugged if I know. When I'm dead?

Not the answer Frank was looking for. He shifts restlessly, then leaps up, walks a couple of steps away and then back to Fairdale. Takes another swig and hands the flask back. Drops the cigarette and stamps on it.

FAIRDALE (CONT'D)

Everyone dies, Mr Thompson.

THOMPSON
(looking anywhere else)
Thanks for the drink.

He leaves Fairdale alone on the bench.

INT. VETERAN'S SHELTER, WOODHOUSE MOOR - DAY

A crowded reception inside the small building.

Tea is served around a handful of small round cafe tables.
Many stand pressed against the walls in conversation.

Frank enters through the main doors as if stepping onto stage: the hullabaloo stops as all eyes turn.

FRANK
Is there any more of that tea?

EXT. QUEENS THEATRE CINEMA, LEEDS CITY CENTRE - DAY

May walks down the street and passes the cinema.

She stops, turns around to notice a small queue of people lining up for a matinee.

INT. CINEMA AUDITORIUM - DAY

May sits illuminated by the flickers of the big screen.

POV: Scene from "King Kong" - The tribes of Skull Island prepare Fay Wray as a sacrifice for the beast.

Their painted faces look up in wonder as the trees part and the colossal Kong hoves into view.

Fay Wray, tied to the pillars of the sacrificial altar, writhes against her bonds as the face of the ape gazes upon her. She screams over and over.

May watches in awe as Kong reaches down and plucks Wray from the pillars like fruit and carries her away into the jungle.

Something overwhelms May - she struggles to stand and edge out of the row of seats to leave with the sound of the tinny orchestra and Fay Wray's screams ringing out.

INT. VETERAN'S SHELTER, WOODHOUSE MOOR- DAY

Frank is holding court while sat down at a table with The Mayor, Eggleswick and the other men of the delegation.

Councillor Hart and the other females of the reception circle uneasily on the fringes.

FRANK

It's called The Cyclone. It has an eighty-six foot drop - the highest drop until this point was the Sky Chaser at eighty foot.

MAYOR

How high is that?

GARDINER

Quite high.

EGGLESWICK

Victoria Hall is about ninety foot.

GARDINER

What about that Big Dipper?

FRANK

That's a sixty-foot drop.

MAYOR

How much difference can twenty feet make?

FRANK

A maximum speed of sixty miles an hour. The big dipper reaches only forty miles an hour. Your Austin Ten does about fifty on a good day.

EGGLESWICK

Your Alvis does a lot more, I'm sure, Frank.

General reaction of being impressed.

FRANK

Well, possibly. Anyway, the people who go on the big rides today need something a little faster than their average car, right? If they are to be ... exhilarated.

The crowd appreciate a wordsmith.

FRANK (CONT'D)

The queues were long but my father stood in line - this was the second time, mind - he'd taken me out there when I was just a lad and I've never forgotten it. He stood there happily for about - oh, must have been an hour, hour and a half. And it was my thinking that - I saw the years fall off him. He kept pointing out the blooming' tie bars and riveting. He knew I didn't understand any of that.

EGGLESWICK

Still don't.

People are too taken by Frank's telling to appreciate the joke. He presses on, smiling.

FRANK

But the whole - experience - It's just magnificent. Everyone we saw was laughing and giggling. Children, couples, families. So happy. Just like before the war.

MAYOR

It's the future, in't it?

EGGLESWICK

It's certainly popular.

FRANK

In any event, my father went on and screamed like a schoolgirl on the way down, ricked his neck on the first turn and had to lie down in the hotel the whole next day.

General laughter.

FRANK (CONT'D)

That was a year before he - we came back from America and he ... about a three month later, he ...

They know the ending. It's anti-climactic.

FRANK (CONT'D)

But - I am sure, gentleman, he would have loved to see this.

MAYOR

And Golden Acre, of course. Two great legacies.

EGGLESWICK

And the hundreds of family homes built by Thompson and Son. Not to be forgotten.

FRANK

Yes. And the Parkway Hotel.

GARDINER

The Hotel?

FRANK

Of course. Eventually, people will want to come from further afield and so they'll need somewhere to stay.

Frank catches Eggleswick's eye who looks furious.

MAYOR

Excellent - a destination spot! That will be a great boon to the city.

GARDINER

Absolutely. Great idea, eh David?

EGGLESWICK

Brilliant.

MAYOR

Well. I am looking forward to attending your grand opening on Good Friday.

FRANK

Thank you, your worship, for reminding me. I have a number of things to take care of before the big day.

Councillor Hart appears to the same consternation as if she entered a gentleman's club.

HART

About that, Mr Thompson -

GARDINER

Oh for goodness sake -

HART

-- many of us are quite uneasy about opening such a venture on a holy day.

FRANK

The workers need their bank holiday, Mrs Hart. I would have thought the Labour party would agree. Perhaps you can take a vote among your members.

The boys enjoy the put-down. Hart seethes.

FRANK (CONT'D)

And don't forget, you are all welcome guests at the opening of the Coconut Grove. Although no beer, I'm afraid. Just tea dances at the minute.

He glides past Hart who fires a passing shot.

HART

And no doubt that's how it will stay, Mr Thompson.

He stops and turns.

HART (CONT'D)

The committee - of which I am a member - is unlikely to approve your application. At least while I have breath in my body.

FRANK

Then I wish you good health, madam.

EXT. VETERAN'S SHELTER, WOODHOUSE MOOR- DAY

Frank exits the tea shelter pursued by EGGLESWICK.

EGGLESWICK

Is that it?

Frank turns and he and David face off.

FRANK

Did you not enjoy the show?

EGGLESWICK

And who said you could mention the bloody hotel?

(MORE)

EGGLESWICK (CONT'D)

No-one on the board has signed off on that, least of all your major partner.

FRANK

It's inevitable.

EGGLESWICK

Don't run before you can walk. Sort out the ballroom first.

FRANK

When they come and can't get a dry martini, they'll soon change their tune.

EGGLESWICK

You can't just bribe them like that with free entry.

FRANK

(frustrated)

This whole bloody building is one big bribe.

EGGLESWICK

You mean civic pride. Your father built his business over a decade.

FRANK

Golden Acre was his dream too.

EGGLESWICK

According to you. He also knew the value of bricks and mortar. Don't piss away all our capital on the park.

FRANK

You bought into the park.

EGGLESWICK

Because I promised your father I would.

This is news to Frank. He weighs up what it means.

EGGLESWICK (CONT'D)

You have certain obligations to me. I'm not happy with the way things are being run. It's not according to the agreement. I'm not the only one.

Frank backs off, turns to leave - stops - remembering something - touching the inside of his jacket.

FRANK
Have your solicitors been writing
to me?

EGGLESWICK
What?

Frank scrutinises EGGLESWICK for any signs of guilt, but sees genuine ignorance instead.

FRANK
Never mind. I'm late.

Frank walks away.

EXT. MUSIC TOWER, BIG POND, GOLDEN ACRE - DAY

The Mock Tudor pagoda sits on a man made promontory into the boating lake.

CU: The giant PA SPEAKERS play...

MUSIC CUE: "Happy Days are Here Again" by Jack Hylton or similar.

The tinny sounds echo through the empty park and over...

INT. FEMALE TOILETS NEAR KIOSKS, GOLDEN ACRE - DAY

Bill is in the final stages of installing a new toilet in the female lavatory, in one of the walled stalls. Tools including a plumber's wrench litter the floor.

Having worked hard, Bill is sweaty and breathing heavy.

Alice enters into the lavatory and the handwash basin area behind him.

ALICE
It's done then?

He stands and turns to face her.

BILL
If it meets with your satisfaction.

ALICE
Don't do that.

THE SOUND OF THE DISTANT MUSIC TOWER weaves between them.

BILL
They got it working then.

ALICE
Evidently.

BILL
(FAINT SINGING)
"Your cares and troubles are gone /
They'll be no more from now on - "

ALICE
May I?

BILL steps out of the stall and gestures her to inspect. As she enters, he makes his way to the sinks to wash his hands.

Alice inspects his handiwork with feigned expertise before re-emerging.

ALICE (CONT'D)
You'd never recognise it from this morning.

BILL
Good. My work is done then. Until the next thing.

ALICE
There's no rest for the wicked.

BILL
Speaking of which, have you finished your modelling?

ALICE
Mr Buxton has gone, yes, and I resent your insinuation.

BILL
You resent it? If it's wrong, why would you?

ALICE
And I think Frank would resent it too.

BILL
I've worked for him and his father for over twenty years.

ALICE
And we're very grateful.

BILL
I helped build nearly everything in
this park.

ALICE
But you're not indispensable.

BILL
Indispensable?

ALICE
Meaning you would not be missed.

Bill steps forward, closing the distance.

BILL
Meaning you wouldn't miss me?

ALICE
What?

BILL
You've been chasing after me for
this and that all week.

Something turns inside her - a sense of the weather changing.

ALICE
I don't know what you mean.

BILL
I think you do.

He edges closer. She backs up a little into the stall.

ALICE
(attempt to defuse)
Bill, we're standing in a ladies
lavatory.

BILL
Perfectly romantic.

She sees what's about to happen but can't quite believe it.

ALICE
Bill?

--He grabs her --tries to kiss her on the mouth - she
resists -- turning her mouth from side to side to evade him
until he connects.

She slaps his face - he reels slightly and she back pedals further into the stall.

ALICE (CONT'D)

No!

BILL at the entrance of the stall blocking her escape.

He moves forward again, this time pushing her to the tiled side wall. His face in hers - a hand over her breast.

She slides down the wall in a desperate effort to get past, but he wrestles her to the floor.

With him on top of her, her HANDS FLAIL AROUND THE FLOOR before finding --

CU: Her HAND grabbing the heavy plumber's WRENCH.

She hooks the wrench squarely into the jaw of his face. CRACK! He screams.

Clutching his face he falls backwards out of the stall, lying on his back and rolling around in agony.

ALICE stumbles to her feet and darts past him to the exit.

EXT. LADIES TOILETS NEAR KIOSK, GOLDEN ACRE - CONTINUOUS

Alice emerges into the park, breathless, distressed, disorientated.

She strides through the park first down one path, before aborting and doubling back on herself. The tinny music bounces around the park and inside her skull.

Overwhelmed, she stops, panting - looking around her.

EXT. CHURCHYARD, SUBURBAN LEEDS - DAY

From his car, Frank walks along the main path into the same churchyard he drove away from before. The grounds are bounded by dark cedars and littered with the old headstones that mark the graves.

CU: Frank's face as he looks ahead to see his target.

POV: In the distance, a newer and more recent headstone, grand and ornate.

He edges towards his father's grave.

FLASHBACK: EGYPTIAN VILLAGE, 1916

Looking up from low angle into blue sky as the face of young Frank hoves into view.

POV: He stares down at the body of the SOLDIER WHO GAVE HIM A CIGARETTE.

CU: The FACE is lacerated and punctured by shrapnel - a glimpse of skull. Memento Mori.

END OF FLASHBACK

CU: Wretched face of older Frank peers down at the headstone.

POV: We see only part of the gravestone epitaph: "In loving memory of Herbert Robert Thompson."

Frank's hand clutches inside his jacket, he feels his chest. Breathless! He suffers the same panic attack as before.

From a discreet distance, we see Frank collapse and burst into inaudible sobs in an empty graveyard.

The dark cedars whisper and shuffle in the wind.

EXT. MUSIC TOWER, BIG POND, GOLDEN ACRE - DAY

The music has finished. The park is silent. The afternoon sun throws longer shadows and an intense amber glow.

INT. LADIES TOILETS, NEAR KIOSK - DAY

Bill sits on the floor, his body propped up awkwardly underneath the sinks.

He cradles his angry swollen jaw with one hand while vainly trying to splint it with a strip of rag from his toolbox.

He glances up to see Alice slowly entering the bathroom to stand over him.

INT. PARK MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Iris works at her desk before being disturbed by the sudden appearance of a dirty and dishevelled Alice, with the injured Bill behind her.

EXT. CITY CENTRE, LEEDS - DAY

May stands on the bustling streets of The Headrow, waiting while the public hurry by her.

She turns and looks down the street and recognises immediately Paget coming straight at her.

Soon, he recognises her too, with an awkward nod of the head. He walks over to her out of reluctant courtesy.

MAY

Hello there.

PAGET

Hello again. Nice to see you again.

MAY

I thought you'd be on a train by now.

PAGET

...I bumped into an old friend. We played together on a recording. And you?

MAY

I went to the cinema.

PAGET

Oh. Anything good?

MAY

A romance.

They are distracted as a car pulls up alongside the kerb. The back door opens in the familiar chauffeur-driven car. Frank steps out onto the pavement.

She rushes forward to greet him with a peck on the cheek, while he glances nervously across to Paget.

FRANK

(to Paget)

I don't believe I've had the pleasure.

Seeing his discomfort, May breaks off.

MAY

Oh. I do beg your pardon. This is Mr Paget.

PAGET
 (extending a hand)
 Delighted.

MAY
 Mr Paget was conducting the -
 rehearsal I was telling you about.
 We were at the Varieties.

FRANK
 Of course. Well, how was she?

PAGET
 She is a wonderful singer.

Frank still stares as if waiting.

PAGET (CONT'D)
 A true talent. I will make the
 highest recommendation to Jack when
 I see him.

FRANK
 That's very gracious of you, isn't
 it May?

MAY
 (not breaking eye contact
 with Paget)
 It's very kind indeed.

PAGET
 Not at all.

A moment before...

FRANK
 Well, we should be off.

MAY
 (offering her hand)
 Safe journey, Mr Paget.

PAGET
 (shaking her hand)
 And to you.

FRANK
 (offering his hand)
 Good afternoon.

PAGET
 (shaking)
 Mr Thompson.

Frank and May get into the back seat and the car drives off. Paget watches them, looks at his watch, and moves off.

EXT. GOLDEN ACRE PARK ENTRANCE - DAY

Iris leads the injured Bill out to a waiting car, flanked by TWO LABOURERS. Alice watches from the turnstiles.

Iris and the labourers make Bill comfortable in the back seat. Alice approaches the side of the car as Iris nods a farewell and steps into the passenger seat.

Alice looks into the back seat and sees the top of Bills face - the rest obscured by his hand and a rag nursing his face.

She catches his eye as the car starts up and moves away along the long road away from the park.

INT. BANK, LEEDS CITY CENTRE - DAY

Paget walks into the ornate bank interior and up to the cashier's desk.

From his inside jacket he pulls out an envelope, opens it and takes out a cheque and hands it over to the CASHIER.

CASHIER
Paying in, sir?

PAGET
Yes. Thank you.

CU: CHEQUE - PAYEE LINE, in handwritten ink - "GORDON PAGET"

The bank stamp SLAMS on the paper.

CU: The PAYOR LINE, handwritten ink - "FRANK H THOMPSON"

Paget takes the receipt, unsmiling, and leaves.

EXT. NEW SUBURBAN HOUSE, OUTSIDE OF LEEDS - DAY

As the sun sets, Frank's car turns up the drive of another large, ornate but different house.

Some piles of timber and brick remain in front and the garage appears to be still unfinished.

A wooden sign at the entrance of the drive reads:

"Thomson and Sons of Leeds - Builders of Family Homes"

INT. RECEPTION HALL, NEW SUBURBAN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The interior of the house is empty but more inviting with darker panels and lampshades glowing in the fading light.

May walks into the hall, followed by Frank who closes the door behind them, whereupon May turns and embraces him.

MAY
It's lovely.

FRANK
You haven't seen it yet.

MAY
I know it will be. Everything will be lovely.

She kisses him deeply before turning to climb the stairs. She stops halfway up and turns back.

MAY (CONT'D)
Are all the rooms ready?

FRANK
Go and see.

Smiling, she races up the stairs and he watches her go, enchanted.

INT. PARK MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Alone, ALICE sits at her desk, smoking a cigarette, illuminated by the glow of desk lamps.

She stares straight ahead as she drags. As she does, she sees that the sleeve of her suit jacket is streaked with dirt.

RING! The Telephone on the desk makes her jump. Recovering she lifts the receiver.

ALICE
Hello.

INT. DRAWING ROOM, SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Frank stands next to his phone as it rests on a table.

FRANK
I didn't think you could still be there, but apparently it's true.

INT. PARK MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

ALICE
Where have you been?

FRANK
(V.O.)
Always missing rehearsal, I know.
Although I had quite a show myself-

ALICE
- The opening.

INT. DRAWING ROOM, SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

FRANK
Well, yes. That and other things.

INT. PARK MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

ALICE
Frank, I -

FRANK
(V.O.)
- I kept my promise, Alice. I went
to see him. I did the gardening.

She freezes.

ALICE
And how was that then?

She listens to the static silence, unsure of what she hears.

INT. DRAWING ROOM, SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Frank is unable to speak, trying to compose himself.

FRANK
Oh. You know.

INT. PARK MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

ALICE
I do, yes.

INT. DRAWING ROOM, SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Frank recovers himself a little.

FRANK

I'm grateful for you holding the fort. I won a few hearts and minds at the reception. Did Bill sort out the ladies loos?

INT. PARK MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

She looks at the filth on her sleeve.

ALICE

Bill - had a terrible accident, I'm afraid.

FRANK

(V.O.)

What? Is he alright? ... Alice?

ALICE

Yes, yes. He's not - he fell over in the toilets. Wet floor on the tiles. Smashed his face on the porcelain. Iris took him to hospital.

FRANK

(V.O.)

You didn't go with him?

ALICE

No. I didn't.

INT. DRAWING ROOM, SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

FRANK

Bloody hell. Without him, things will pretty much fall apart.

INT. PARK MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

She struggles to contain herself.

ALICE

What about the letter Frank?

INT. DRAWING ROOM, SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Frank's hand darts inside his jacket.

FRANK

Almost forgot. Hang on.

He puts the receiver down on the table, opens the envelope and extracts the letter.

POV: In his hand, the unfolded letter with the solicitor's letterhead.

INSERT: Part of the Letter, following the typewritten ink:
 .."client has asserted her right to begin proceeding to sue for A DIVORCE, under the relevant ..."

BACK TO SCENE

ALICE

(V.O.)

Frank! Frank!

Frank looks around before picking up the receiver with a free hand while still reading the letter with the other.

FRANK

It's nothing. Nothing at all.
 Property law - boundary adjustments
 in park deeds.

INT. PARK MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

ALICE

(holding her face with her
 other hand)

I need a day with you here. I can't
 have you just turn up on opening
 night, make a silly speech and
 trust your luck.

INT. DRAWING ROOM, SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Frank is not listening, already captivated by the sight of May entering from the hallway in a long, very sheer negligee.

He slides the letter back into his inside jacket pocket.

FRANK

I can't help being in demand.

ALICE
 (V.O.)
 Frank, please!

FRANK
 I'll be in first thing.

INT. PARK MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

ALICE
 And send the car otherwise I'll be
 bloody sleeping here.

She replaces the receiver. After a beat, she gets up and walks off.

MUSIC CUE: Jack Hylton's "Bitter Sweet" or similar slow waltz plays over the following...

EXT. GOLDEN ACRE PARK - NIGHT

The rides and attractions sleep in the moonlight. The big pond lays calm. There is a light on in the BALLROOM.

INT. GOLDEN ACRES BALLROOM - NIGHT

A WATCHMAN steps inside the ballroom to check things over, before stepping out.

The main lights die leaving the moonlight to seep in through the windows.

The glitterball twinkles faintly in the darkness, sending pale blue beams dancing across the darkened fronds of palm trees.

INT. BEDROOM, SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

May lies back on a sumptuous eiderdown. Looks down to see...

POV: Frank's face and naked shoulders come into view.

May's hands rise up and seem to reach for the opposite ends of the headboard - a scene reminiscent of the sacrifice of Fay Wray to the giant ape.

EXT. GOLDEN ACRE PARK ENTRANCE - NIGHT

FADE OUT MUSIC CUE

Alice stands alone in her coat in front of the turnstiles and the darkened golden acre sign.

A car pulls up in front of the entrance, and Alice walks to the car and enters the back seat.

The car pulls off as we close in on the empty entrance and the silhouette sign above.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GOLDEN ACRE PARK ENTRANCE - DAY

The sign is now brightly resplendent in Good Friday sunshine. The roof of the turnstile building is festooned with bunting. A large hand painted banner is also present: "NOW open for our second season!"

Pull back to see that a large crowd has gathered, with cars and buses on the road delivering still more.

A small stage has been erected to the side of the Entrance, and a welcoming party and some of the staff, including Sydney, labourers, Violet.

Another gathering includes the Mayor, Councillors Hart and Gardiner, others from the shelter reception and Eggleswick. Peter Buxton is setting up his camera tripod so it faces the stage.

Alice rushes in, dictating to Iris who trails in her wake.

ALICE

They'll need to put a chain on the rowing boats until two o'clock. Make sure Anderton puts a sign out.

IRIS

Everybody loves the boats.

ALICE

They can love them from two o'clock only. Anderton is helping Sid with the railway.

IRIS

Bill was going to help, wasn't he?

ALICE

Yes, he was.

She passes by Buxton who calls after her.

BUXTON

All set up here, Ms Thompson! Ready when you are!

ALICE

Very good, Mr Buxton.

She is stopped in her tracks by David Eggeswick.

ALICE (CONT'D)

David!

EGGLESWICK

Are we in danger of starting proceedings, Alice?

ALICE

Absolutely we are.

EGGLESWICK

And where is His Majesty?

The Mayor calls and waves from over from near the stage.

MAYOR

Miss Thompson!

He gestures to his watch with a shrug. When will we start?

EGGLESWICK

(leaning in, threatening)
He's on a short rope, your brother.

ALICE

And if he doesn't turn up soon I'll be the one to hang him with it. So if you'd excuse me.

Alice and Iris escape a few yards.

IRIS

Do you know where he is?

ALICE

(shaking her head)
We'll have to open. Tell the Mayor-

She is interrupted by a distant car horn. Frank's car weaves past the parked cars to arrive at the entrance. The crowd and welcoming party starts to silence and turn.

CU: The back door opens and a pair of well-dressed ladies heels swing out from the footwell and plant themselves on the pavement.

As we track up from the feet, The legs are connected to -
LILY HARLING - awkwardly made up to mask her pale sadness.
The brim of her hat partially shades her eyes, but we can see
them dart around, taking in the crowd.

Frank appears at her side, and behind them, still emerging
from the car, is the heavily bandaged face of BILL MADELEY.

The three of them walk towards ALICE. Frank greets his
stunned sister with a kiss on the cheek.

FRANK
Is everything ready?

ALICE
Of course.

FRANK
Looks like quite a turn out.

ALICE
(Turning to Lily)
Lily. I - I'm glad to see you well.

LILY
(enigmatic, quiet)
I wouldn't have missed it.

The three of them lead on towards the stage, with Bill only
partially catching her eye as he goes past.

Alice watches open-jawed as her brother bounds onto the stage
and becomes the master of ceremonies.

FRANK
Ladies and Gentleman, if I can have
your attention?

The crowd subdues.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Thank you. Ladies and Gentleman,
boys and girls, Your Worship,
Councillors. I should like to
welcome you all to this: our
opening day!

Applause.

FRANK (CONT'D)
This year we have some splendid new
additions to the park, including the
wonderful Coconut Grove Ballroom...

Applause.

CU: MAY stands in the audience applauding good-naturedly. She glances over at Lily Harling who stands motionless by the side of the stage.

FRANK (CONT'D)

And we are honoured and excited to have the world record holding magnificent seaplane - The Supermarine S6B - which will be offering - for a small extra fee - rides across our Big Pond.

Applause. CU: Alice looks around at the general enthusiasm and looks relieved.

FRANK (CONT'D)

But before we continue, there is one person who has helped make this all possible. Someone without whom I would not be able to have put in place all the wonderful plans for this season.

Alice is alert, about to shift towards the stage to accept the plaudits.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Mr Bill Madeley, everyone. Bill, come up please!

Applause. Alice stops and stares as she sees Bill ascend onto stage with his bandaged jaw.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Bill has worked for the firm for a long time and when my father first proposed an amusement park, I dare say you were quite sceptical, weren't you? But you recognised my father's dream, and Bill has laboured with his colleagues night and day to build some of the great exhibits you see inside.

Applause. Alice still stares.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Now normally, I'd not be able to shut the man up, but regrettably in the course of his duties last week, he had a nasty accident and has fractured his jaw.

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

So he is under strict instructions
to put a sock in it!

Good natured laughter and cheers. Bill looks out to the audience and catches Alice staring directly at him.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Bill's come here today, even though
he should be laid up in bed,
because he believes that this park
should be a crowning jewel in the
cultural life of this great city.
That we can continue to attract
visitors not just from round here,
but from all around the world.

Applause. Eggeswick scoffs slightly, drawing a glance from Alice nearby.

FRANK (CONT'D)

And now, without further ado, I
declare Golden Acre: open!

Applause. Frank invites the dignitaries on stage. Lily Harling, The Mayor et al squeeze next to Frank as Peter Buxton choreographs them into a strange family photo, with the dour Lily and bruised Bill by Frank's side.

Iris looks to Alice, asking permission with her eyes.

ALICE

Go on. I've got work to do.

Iris dashes to the stage. Alice watches for a moment before she wades through the crowds herding towards the turnstiles.

A staff member lets her in a side gate and into the park.

EXT. SHORE OF THE BIG POND, GOLDEN ACRE - DAY

Alice sits on a bench set back from the shoreline watching the S6B. The crowds in front of her swarm to see the plane.

CU: Painted sign near the shoreline: "Winner of the Schneider Trophy - The Supermarine S6B - British Aviation Prestige - Rides Today!"

Alice watches in the distance as THE PILOT walks down to the shoreline where a small rowing boat awaits

Unannounced, Frank arrives and sits on the bench beside her.

FRANK
You didn't make the photograph.

No reply.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Look around. Everything is running
just fine.

ALICE
(Turning on him)
No thanks to you. I make this
happen Frank, I do.

FRANK
Bill deserved a mention after what
he's been through.

Turned away from him, the bitter irony makes her wince.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I thought it might cheer him up
with everything that's happened.
You know Dad was fond of him -

ALICE
- Yes, I was there, Frank. I had a
father too. And a mother, if you
remember. But strangely, that
hardly comes up does it.

FRANK
(taken aback)
That's not quite fair.

Reeling from this, Frank slowly stands up from the bench.

FRANK (CONT'D)
They're waiting for you.

ALICE
What? Who?

FRANK
Flight Lieutenant Timothy Greggs.
The first ride out on the pond.

Alice stands up - doubletakes.

FRANK (CONT'D)
You'd be better placed to fawn over
him than I would.

ALICE

I'm going out there in - that!

FRANK

I prefer the rides that are tethered
to the ground by - timber, rivets
and steel ties. The safe kind.

She struggles to hate her brother, even though she wants to.

ALICE

You don't get to do this Frank.

FRANK

Do what exactly?

ALICE

Just the fun bits.

He sulks at the scolding. She put her hands on his shoulders.

ALICE (CONT'D)

You're not a bad man.

He looks pained and confused. She spots something over Frank's
shoulder. She looks and sees a young woman looking over at
Frank. It is May, sheepishly pretending not be with Frank.

Frank follows Alice's line of sight - he knows she knows.

ALICE (CONT'D)

But you make poor decisions.

FRANK

Says the woman going for a ride in
that thing.

She smiles weakly.

FRANK (CONT'D)

People are waiting. It's opening
night. Time to start the show.

Alice nods and gathers herself then barrels through the
crowds to get to the shoreline where she arrives at the feet
of FLIGHT LIEUTENANT TIMOTHY GREGGS - blonde and playful.

GREGGS

Hello there. You Alice?

ALICE

Absolutely.

GREGGS
 (shaking her hand)
 Timothy. Nice to meet you. You know
 we're not taking off, right? Just a
 little cruise on the lake.

ALICE
 I don't care!

She smiles broadly and Greggs reciprocates.

GREGGS
 Righto. You'll need this.

He hands her a flying helmet, which throws her for a second
 before she intuitively puts it on.

Excited, she turns around to show Frank, but scanning the
 crowd there is no trace. Instead her eyes find Bill who
 stares back at her.

She pauses before defiantly securing the chinstraps firmly
 and turning back to get into the rowing boat.

CUT TO:

CU: The ROLLS-ROYCE 1900 Engines CLATTER into life.

From the shoreline, we hear the throttle up of the engines
 BUILD TO A ROAR. The wash of the engines hits the gathered
 crowd - dust, papers and clothes ripple and fly up.

BILL is slightly blinded by the dust and retires from the
 shoreline.

INT. SUPERMARINE S6B COCKPIT - DAY

CU: Alice nervously smiling in the cockpit, shaking off
 something, inspired.

EXT. THE BIG POND, GOLDEN ACRE - DAY

The Supermarine S6B, briefly on full power, rockets across
 the boating lake and out of view, leaving us to the sight of
 the shoreline of Golden acre, teeming with life, colour and
 stories.

SNAP TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE ONE