

A FIGHTING CHANCE

A screenplay drama

by Lauren Ennis

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A FIGHTING CHANCE

BY: LAUREN ENNIS

INT CATHOLIC CHURCH DAY

England, 1952. Jim is sitting in a back row pew of a seemingly empty church as he flips through the pages of a hymn book without reading them. He drops the book on the floor and quickly picks it up as he looks around the church in embarrassment. He puts the book down next to him and looks from a row of confessionals on the side of the church to the front exit directly behind him and back again. He stands with a sigh and enters one of the confessionals.

INT CONFESSIONAL DAY

Jim enters the confessional but remains standing. A light shines through the confessional screen.

PRIEST

Yes, my son?

Jim jumps, startled, at the sound of the Priest's voice then reluctantly kneels.

JIM

I beg your...uh, yes, hello. That is, bless me Father, I...I'm afraid that you'll have to pardon me, I'm not used to these sorts of things.

PRIEST

There is no need to be nervous, many a prodigal son has returned to the house of the Lord.

Jim shifts his weight on the kneeler and tries to peer past the confessional screen.

JIM

Right. (Pauses) Say, it's not a problem if I'm not a Catholic, is it? I mean I'm not sinning or anything by being here, am I?

PRIEST

Of course not, it can take many years for the blind to see through the grace of God.

JIM

It's nothing personal, or
anything. I mean, it's not that
I'm just not a Catholic, I'm not
really much of anything actually.

Jim looks at his watch then stands and starts to exit the
confessional.

PRIEST

Please, sit down.

JIM

I really—

PRIEST

You really must have something
serious on your mind to come here
if you 'aren't really much of
anything'.

Jim turns around with a sigh then kneels again.

PRIEST

Go on, my son, tell me what is
troubling you.

JIM

It was all so long ago, I don't
even know where to...Do you know
anything of Spain, father?

PRIEST

I've been told it's a beautiful
country.

JIM

I doubt if it is anymore.

Jim clears his throat.

JIM

It was late thirty six. After a
year of loafing about London after
graduation, my friends and I
decided it was time to buck up and
move on. Most of the old gang went
home to take up the family
business or go back on their
parents' allowance...

EXT TRAIN DAY

The scene flashes back to nineteen thirty-six as a train rides through the Spanish countryside.

JIM

(Offscreen) Of course, Reg and I still had something in our pockets, so we decided to take up a business of another sort.

INT TRAIN DAY

Jim and Reg are sitting across from one another on the train. Both are in their early to mid-twenties. Reg is sloppily devouring an apple and looking out the window as Jim attempts to read a book of Spanish phrases. Reg crunches loudly as he takes a large bite out of the apple. Jim looks up from his book in irritation.

REG

What?

Jim shakes his head and resumes reading his book. Reg resumes loudly chewing the apple as Jim becomes increasingly agitated. Finally, Jim grabs the apple from him and throws it out the window.

REG

And what the hell was that for?!

JIM

If you spent less time chomping in my ear and more time—

Reg starts picking pieces of apple out of his teeth and flicking them onto the floor.

REG

What, hiding behind books like you?

JIM

It wouldn't kill you to learn something besides how to say 'more beer please'.

Reg opens his bag and removes a copy of Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. He holds the book up.

REG

It's all here, professor.

JIM
Not that tripe again.

REG
Someday, you'll understand. One
day when you're—

Reg grabs Jim's phrase book and holds it above his head. Jim tries to take the book back. Reg turns towards the window as he tosses the book from one hand to the other. He looks out the window to see a herd of bulls grazing at a ranch, then tosses the book back to Jim as he sits down and stares out the window.

REG

Ah, los toros. Beautiful, aren't
they?

The camera focuses in on the window as ranchers on horseback start herding the bulls.

REG

The struggle between man and
beast, the passion of the
aficionado! That's where you learn
about Spain, right there.

Reg points out the window as Jim turns to watch.

JIM

And I suppose you know all about
that?

Reg stretches across his seat and puts his hat over his eyes.

REG

Give me time, my friend, just give
me time.

Jim tosses his phrase book onto the seat beside him and continues to stare out the window as Reg tries to sleep. The camera pans to the window as the bulls are herded out of view.
EXT MADRID STREET NIGHT
Jim and Reg are walking down a Madrid street later that night. Reg is enthusiastically telling a story as Jim smokes a cigarette.

REG

So then the next morning, I looked her square in the eye and said it's nothing personal, but there are things at stake, things that you can't understand just yet. Then she—

JIM

Do you really expect me to believe that?

REG

Are you calling me a liar?!

Jim tosses his cigarette onto the pavement and stomps it out.

JIM

I could use the Spanish word for liar if you prefer.

Jim starts to walk ahead as Reg rushes to keep up with him.

REG

Well that's how it would have happened if only her bloody boyfriend hadn't shown up.

JIM

Don't worry, someday you'll find a girl just nice enough to let you trounce her heart to bits.

REG

You think so?

JIM

Sure. Of course I can't speak for how much you'll have to pay for her.

REG

(Sarcastically) You always know just what to say to boost a guy's confidence, don't you, Jim?

They stop outside of a run-down bar. Jim reads a menu posted on the building as Reg stands off to the side and lights a cigarette.

Jim finishes reading the menu and turns back to Reg.

REG

Well?

JIM

We've probably been to worse places.

REG

And the price?

JIM

Just right.

REG

That cheap? Well, what are we waiting for?

They enter the bar.

INT MADRID BAR NIGHT

Reg and Jim enter the crowded, smoky bar and make their way to an empty table. Reg signals to a Waitress as she places drinks on a nearby table.

REG

Senorita! Senorita, here!

The Waitress looks at Reg with annoyance as she takes another customer's order. Reg signals to her again. The Waitress mutters something to the other customers and approaches Reg and Jim's table.

WAITRESS

Well?

JIM

I'm sorry, miss, but he's still learning Spanish customs.

WAITRESS

Maybe you should teach him some manners while you're at it.

JIM

It's my personal mission. Could we please have two beers?

WAITRESS

Coming right up.

REG

You know you didn't have to make me look like an ass just to impress her; a tip would have done just fine.

JIM

(Sarcastically) When she comes back I'll make it up to you and tell her that you're Hemingway and she'll be just itching to get written into your new masterpiece.

REG

That would put some spring in her step.

The Waitress returns to their table with two glasses of beer.

JIM

Gracias.

Reg raises his glass in a toast.

REG

To Spain! Viva la Repub—

Before Reg can finish his toast, one of the bar's customers, Carlos, punches another Customer in the face, sending him stumbling into Reg and Jim's table. Jim's drink is knocked over and spills onto his shirt. The Customer stands and walks towards Carlos as the Waitress finds the Bartender. The Bartender leads the Customer out of the bar. The Customer resists.

CUSTOMER

I can find the door myself.

The Customer spits at Carlos.

CUSTOMER

Death to you communists and your sham of a republic!

The Bartender leads the Customer out of the bar. The other customers resume their previous activities. Reg and Jim look on stunned. Carlos approaches Jim and Reg's table.

CARLOS

English?

REG

How'd you guess?

CARLOS

Well, you don't seem grim enough to be Russian, and you would have been spitting more than him at the word 'communist' if you were German.

Carlos gestures to the spilled beer.

CARLOS

Please, allow me to replace that drink.
He signals to the Waitress.

CARLOS

Three beers.

She nods enthusiastically.

CARLOS

Thanks, beautiful.

He winks at the Waitress and turns back to Jim and Reg.

JIM

Thanks.

CARLOS

It is the least that I can do for two comrades.

The Waitress brings three glasses of beer to their table.

JIM

Would you care to join us?

REG

We are comrades after all.

CARLOS

Thank you.

He sits down at the table and raises his glass in a toast.

CARLOS

To the Republic! Salud!

All three clink glasses and take swigs from their glasses.

CARLOS

So, what do you think of Spain?

JIM

(Hesitantly) Well, it's just our first night—

REG

But we like what we see.

CARLOS

What brings you to the Brigade?

REG

The cause, naturally; after all it's not the sort of thing you can ignore.

Carlos shrugs and finishes his drink.

CARLOS

You might be surprised.

Carlos stands.

CARLOS

Are you two ready for another round?

Reg eagerly stands.

REG

This one's on me.

CARLOS

Thank you.

Reg walks to the bar and Carlos sits back down.

CARLOS

He's an enthusiastic one.

JIM

To say the least, but he's a good man to have around.

CARLOS

I have no doubt about that. So, tell me, what really brought you to Spain?

JIM

Like he said—

CARLOS

I know, but why *this* cause? Why now?

JIM

Well, now, because university's over.

CARLOS

And the Republic?

JIM

It's as good a reason as any other to stop loafing about.

CARLOS

Ah.

JIM

I know that must sound pretty rotten, but—

CARLOS

But you're not the first Englishman to try and play war in someone else's country.

JIM

I don't call coming all the way here and putting our lives on the line 'playing'.

Carlos leans back in his chair and laughs.

CARLOS

Now, now, no need to get your knickers tied in a knot.

JIM

I'm just used to men showing their comrades some respect where I come from.

CARLOS

I meant no disrespect. I just wanted to warn you that this isn't the fiesta that the posters tell you about.

Carlos looks back at the bar and sees Reg talking to an attractive woman. The woman laughs enthusiastically as Reg tells a story.

CARLOS

Your friend is popular with the ladies.
Jim shrugs.

JIM

More than he was at home anyway.
Reg takes three glasses of beer from the bar and brings them over to the table.

REG

Here we are.
Carlos gestures to the woman Reg was talking to at the bar.

CARLOS

It seems you really do like what you see.
Reg turns to look at the woman. She smiles at him and he nods to her.

REG

Not bad, eh?
Carlos raises his glass in a toast.

CARLOS

To your generosity, Senor...I don't think I got your name.

REG

I'm Reg and this here's Jim, Senor...

CARLOS

Please, call me Carlos. To your generosity, Reg.

REG

It was nothing, one soldier to another, after all.

CARLOS

I meant with the young lady.
Reg looks from Carlos to Jim and back in confusion.

CARLOS

Check your wallet.
Reg checks his pockets for his wallet and realizes that it is missing. He turns to see the woman walking out of the bar and runs out after her.

JIM

You must have eyes in the back of your head.
Carlos takes a swig of his drink and shrugs.

CARLOS

I've just been in Madrid too long.
Carlos finishes his drink and stands.

CARLOS

But it's getting late.
He extends his hand to Jim. Jim hesitates then shakes his hand.

CARLOS

I hope we will meet again; I always enjoy talking to the Brigade. It allows one to travel without leaving the bar.

JIM

You should try the real thing sometime.

CARLOS

Sometime, perhaps.

JIM

By the way, I didn't quite catch what brings you to the Loyalist side.

CARLOS

I support the Republic.

JIM

Many do. The communists, the anarchists, the socialists...

CARLOS

Let's say that I'm just another volunteer.

Carlos stands and walks to the exit then turns around.

CARLOS

Adios.

Jim shakes his head and takes a sip of his drink as Carlos exits the bar.

EXT BATTLEFIELD DAY

Several days later Jim and Reg have begun to fight with the International Brigade on the outskirts of Madrid. They are taking cover with several other soldiers in a trench as they attempt to block the Nationalist's advance. The soldiers are poorly equipped with outdated guns and ragged clothes. Reg's gun starts to jam as he tries to shoot an advancing soldier. Reg becomes frustrated as he tries to work the gun.

JIM

I thought you were an expert shot?

REG

Not with rifles from Napoleon's army!

Jim takes Reg's gun and kills an enemy soldier with it.

JIM

There.

Jim hands the gun back to Reg.

REG

Well, I loosened it up for you.

They continue shooting at enemy soldiers and ducking to avoid being shot. One of the soldiers in the trench is shot in the stomach and Reg turns to check on him.

REG

Juan!

Juan starts to stand then sits down on the ground with a hand over his wound.

JUAN

It's only a scratch. I just need to sit down a minute.
Reg nods and resumes shooting. The Nationalists slow their fire until they stop shooting. The soldiers wait then look over the trench and see that the Nationalists are no longer there. They start yelling and laughing in celebration.

REG

Now *that* is the Spain I came here for!
Jim starts climbing out of the trench onto the battlefield.

JUAN

What are you doing?!

JIM

Just seeing if our friends left any toys around for us.

JUAN

Jim, come back. You don't know when they'll-
As Jim climbs onto the battlefield a rumbling is heard from offscreen. The men pause and listen then look over the trench and see several tanks approaching. They hastily prepare to retreat. Reg helps Juan stand then climbs to the edge of the trench and sees Jim picking up the Nationalists' abandoned weapons.

REG

Are you bleedin' blind?!
Jim looks up and runs to the edge of the trench.

JIM

I doubt if Napoleon would've known how to use these!
He hands the weapons to Reg and moves to jump into the trench then stops. He turns around and runs back onto the battlefield.

JIM

Go on ahead.

REG

For Christ's sake, Jim!

JIM

Just make sure Juan gets out.
Reg sighs in exasperation and starts to help Juan climb out of the other side of the trench. Jim takes one more gun then turns around and starts to run back to the trench. As he reaches the trench he is shot in the arm. He falls into the trench and is knocked unconscious.

INT HOSPITAL NIGHT

The camera slowly fades in as Jim awakens in a hospital room that night. He starts to sit up in surprise but stops and grimaces in pain. He slowly sits up and looks around the room. The hospital room is large and contains several metal beds and windows. At one end of the room a large crucifix hangs on the wall. There are numerous other wounded soldiers spread

throughout the room sleeping and talking. A nurse, Camilla, is talking with a soldier as she checks his wound. She is in her late twenties, attractive, and wears a nurse's uniform with a nun's habit over her hair. Her hair occasionally appears from beneath her habit and appears to have been cut in a bobbed style that has started to grow out without maintenance. She sees Jim looking around the room, bewildered and walks over to him.

CAMILLA

So, our sleeping princess awakens.

JIM

How long was I out for?

CAMILLA

You were in and out for a few hours. How are you feeling?

JIM

Like I drank about two gallons of whiskey too many before being run over by a truck.

She laughs and removes a wallet from her uniform pocket. She checks to see if anyone is looking then slips the wallet to him as she checks his wound.

CAMILLA

That sounds about right. Well, rest assured that you'll live to fight another battle, comrade.

He looks confused then looks at his wallet and starts to remove the Republican propaganda pamphlets in them. He looks around the room at the other soldiers and quickly puts the pamphlets back into his wallet.

JIM

So you already know.

CAMILLA

Uh huh.

She starts changing the dressing on his wound.

JIM

You are a good Christian then, aren't you.

CAMILLA

I wouldn't say *good*, but I'll settle for understanding.

JIM

Well, I appreciate all your help, Sister, but—

He starts to climb out of the bed and she gently pushes him back onto it.

CAMILLA

But I'm only a novice, and I don't like it when my patients don't follow orders.

He nonchalantly gestures to his wound.

JIM

This? This is just a scratch. You wouldn't want me to let those poor blokes go it alone over just a little—

CAMILLA

A little concussion and broken arm will be just enough to keep you out of commission for a while.
He ignores her and gets up again then cringes in pain and sits down.

CAMILLA

See what bad things happen when you argue with your nurse?
She laughs at him as he sighs in exasperation.

JIM

I'll remember that. So what's there for a bloke to do around here besides stare at the walls?

CAMILLA

They never have told me. One of these days I'll have to come in without the habit and find out.
She notices one of the patients reading a letter.

CAMILLA

We have some books lying around the convent if you don't mind parables too much.

JIM

More religion? I think I'll stick to the walls.

CAMILLA

On second thought, you probably wouldn't have been able to read them anyway. They're mostly in Latin.

JIM

The one class I had to repeat.

CAMILLA

Well I suppose you'll just have to be a little more social then.
He looks around the room at the Nationalist soldiers and gestures to his wallet.

JIM

Easier said...

CAMILLA

I see your point; I haven't exactly been a hit around here myself.

He looks at the nuns attending to patients then back to her. She nods and smirks at him.

CAMILLA

Can you read Spanish?

JIM

I'm trying, but my Spanish isn't much better than my Latin.

CAMILLA

I've got an idea; I've got some of my own books tucked away.
Would a little reading and translating be too painful?

JIM

You think you could manage it? I mean you'd have to know pretty good English...

CAMILLA

After growing up with a father who teaches English for a living there's no escaping it.

JIM

That would be just what I needed. But, as far as I can tell I'm not your only patient.

CAMILLA

I get a break at the end of the shift and a quick one for lunch; we can work on it then.

JIM

That would be perfect!

Camilla looks up to see one of the nuns watching her and Jim. The nun shakes her head in irritation then resumes attending to a patient.

CAMILLA

Speaking of my other patients, that's my cue. She starts to walk to another patient.

JIM

Um, Senorita?

She stops and turns around.

JIM

Thank you, I appreciate all that you're doing Senorita...

CAMILLA

Just Camilla is fine.

He extends his hand.

JIM

I'm Jim.

They shake hands.

CAMILLA

Well, until that break then, Jim.

She turns to walk away again.

JIM

Camilla?

She turns around again and gestures towards the disapproving nun with her eyes.

JIM

I'm sorry, I promise this will be it. It's just; well...why keep helping me like this? After all...

He gestures to his wallet. She smirks mischievously.

CAMILLA

Tally it up to being a good Christian.

He watches as she walks away and attends to another patient.

INT CAMILLA'S ROOM NIGHT

The room is small and furnished with a bed and small nightstand. Camilla enters her room with a sigh and kicks her shoes off

under the bed. She takes a set of rosary beads off of the nightstand and kneels down next to the bed. She starts to say a rosary but starts stumbling through the words. She tries again but still stumbles through the prayer and throws the beads down onto the nightstand. She stands and removes her nurse's uniform, revealing a slip underneath. She removes a cigarette lighter from the nightstand drawer and starts flicking it on and off in agitation as she paces the room. She puts the lighter back into the drawer and turns out the light before she lies down on top of the bed for a few moments. She gets out of bed and turns the light back on, then retrieves a weathered photo from her uniform pocket. The camera focuses in on the photograph which shows Camilla sitting in a garden outside a mansion with her husband and son. She continues to stare at the photo as the scene fades out.

INT HOSPITAL DAY

Jim is sitting in his bed watching the clock. He looks around the room, out the window, and back at the clock in irritation. Sister Lourdes looks up as she finishes administering medication to a patient and chuckles to herself when she sees his agitation. She writes a few notes on the patient's medical chart then walks over to Jim.

SISTER LOURDES

Looking for your book buddy?

JIM

I'm just not used to her being late.

She starts making the empty bed next to him.

SISTER LOURDES

Don't hold it too much against her; I'm sure she would have rather come here instead of spending time thinking about her sins.

JIM

Well, when will she be in?

SISTER LOURDES

I wouldn't expect her today; it usually takes Sister Augustina at least a day to cool down.

JIM

Bloody—

He looks at Sister Lourdes, embarrassed and clears his throat.

JIM

That's too bad. May I ask what she did?

SISTER LOURDES

Nothing serious, but I'll tell you, she'd better watch that sharp tongue. One of these days she'll cut her own throat with it.

She finishes making the bed and tries to close the window behind it. The window is too high and Jim closes it for her when he sees her struggling.

JIM

I wonder what it is that makes her stay here.

SISTER LOURDES

Well it's not the prayers or the company. Now let me see that arm.

He sits down on the bed and she redresses his wound.

JIM

She just doesn't fit in with all this. I mean, a pretty woman like that...

SISTER LOURDES

(Sarcastically) Thanks.

JIM

Not that you aren't lovely, Sister Lourdes, it's just that—
She finishes dressing his wound.

SISTER LOURDES

Just that we both know Sister Magdalena won't be taking her vows anytime soon.

JIM

Magdalena?

She shakes her head.

SISTER LOURDES

Maybe you should add the Bible to that reading list of yours.
She approaches the bed of another patient and checks the condition of his injuries as Jim watches her in confusion.

INT HOSPITAL DAY

Jim is sitting on his bed as Camilla sits in a chair next to him reading aloud from *Don Quixote*. Jim appears bored and starts staring out the window behind her.

CAMILLA

"He was spurred on by his conviction that the world needed his immediate presence. He..."

She notices Jim looking out the window and smirks.

CAMILLA

Then he rode off to find another...

She stands and walks to the window.

CAMILLA

More loyal...

She opens the window.

CAMILLA

Companion.

Jim jumps at the sounds of the window opening and stops daydreaming.

JIM

Well he couldn't really expect Sancho to go on fighting windmills all day without a *little* distraction. She sits down in the chair and closes the book.

JIM

You don't have to stop.

CAMILLA

I'll have plenty of time for the Don and Sancho when I finish my shift here.

She puts the book aside and stretches.

JIM

Any word on how much longer until I can go back?

CAMILLA

Don't tell me our knight's already itching to go errant again.

JIM

More to be useful than errant.

CAMILLA

That would be up to Sister Augustina.

She looks at his wound.

CAMILLA

Besides, you won't be much use in your state.

JIM

Damn it all to....I forgot, I can't even curse around here.

Camilla sits back down with a laugh.

CAMILLA

Stir-crazy?

JIM

From what I hear you'd know something about that. I missed you yesterday.

CAMILLA

So you know about that?

JIM

Let's just say a little bird whistled in my ear.

Camilla looks at Sister Lourdes attending to a patient.

CAMILLA

I wouldn't exactly call her *little* if it's the bird I'm thinking of.

JIM

Don't get fussy, it wasn't all her. I kept at her with questions.

CAMILLA

You really have been cooped up too long if you're that lonely for my company.

He smirks at her.

JIM

More curious than anything. You know I've been wondering what keeps you here; you seem like you could get a bit stir-crazy yourself.

CAMILLA

(Wryly) Nothing I couldn't pray away.

JIM

I can't imagine that you enjoy being stuck with these stuffy old maids. Why a pretty woman like you could get a husband without—

CAMILLA

I did.

She looks away.

JIM

What?

Camilla

He's dead.

JIM

I'm sorry, I didn't...wait, husband?

He looks at Sister Lourdes then back at Camilla. She looks down as she starts ringing her hands.

JIM

But I thought that before you...I mean...

Camilla looks up as Jim clears his throat and looks embarrassed.

CAMILLA

I heard that rumor too.

She sits up straight and stops fidgeting.

CAMILLA

I also heard another rumor that people do strange things in strange times like these.

JIM

Of course, naturally...

CAMILLA

Particularly women who can't pay their husband's debts.

JIM

I'm sorry, I honestly didn't mean to—

CAMILLA

Especially when they have a child to support and factories only pay so much.

JIM

I shouldn't have asked; it's none of my business.

CAMILLA

No, it's not, and it wasn't her business to tell. But I shouldn't be surprised; she's wanted to be rid of my 'bad influence' since she found out that I came here because of a deal with the police.

She continues to watch him as he looks away from her and stares out the window. After a tense silence he clears his throat.

JIM

Your husband was killed in the war?
She nods.

JIM

And the child?

CAMILLA

He's been with my mother in-law since she told the police about me.
He sighs.

JIM

It's one more reminder of why I've got to get back into the fight. They'll be plenty more stories like yours if those fascist bastards have their way.

CAMILLA

My husband was a Nationalist.
She stands as he watches her in shock.

CAMILLA

And he was a good man.
She picks up the book and turns to walk away then turns back to him.

CAMILLA

He just wasn't a very good businessman.
She walks to another patient's bed and checks his wounds as Jim stares at her.

INT HOSPITAL DAY

Camilla enters the hospital room to find Jim wearing a sling and his army uniform as he gathers his belongings. She stands by the door and watches as he walks towards her.

CAMILLA

And just where are you going in such a hurry?
He hands her a telegram. She reads the telegram.

CAMILLA

Can I assume that you don't have Sister Augustina's approval?

JIM

Well you know how the attached the old girl's gotten...

CAMILLA

Are you sure this is the best idea?
He shrugs.

JIM

Probably not, but it's the best that I could come up with.
He takes the telegram from her and puts it in his pocket.

JIM

They need me.

CAMILLA

As much as you need to let that arm heal?

JIM

More.

CAMILLA

And a pretty picture it will be with you trying to shoot with one hand.

JIM

Yea, I suppose my days of glory on the battlefield will be on hold for a bit. But there are always desk jobs.

CAMILLA

So long as you don't get too restless sitting at them. (Pauses)
You're sure about this?

He nods.

JIM

No use putting it off. I've been thinking...
He looks around to be sure no one is listening.

JIM

(Lowering his voice) You've more than done your penance.
He takes her hand.

JIM

Come with me.
She sees Sister Lourdes watching her and pulls her hand away.

CAMILLA

I can't.

JIM

Why not?

CAMILLA

Taking off would be bad enough, but taking off with a man...

JIM

But it wouldn't be like that; you've done me a right turn, let me do the same for you.

CAMILLA

It's very kind of you to offer, but this is one problem that running away would only make worse.

JIM

Running away? And what do you call staying holed up here?!
She shakes her head.

CAMILLA

You couldn't understand.
She starts to walk away from him and he grabs her wrist with his undamaged hand.

JIM

Couldn't I? I spent my life ignoring the world. This war is one thing that I couldn't ignore; you know what's happening just as well as I do. Even in here you must have heard what the Nationalists have been doing to this country!
She pushes him away from her. The other nuns and patients turn when they hear Jim shouting. She sees them watching and walks past the doorway so she won't be seen.

CAMILLA

Yes, I've heard what the Nationalists have done, and seen what the Republicans have done.

JIM

How much longer are you going to spend locked up with your head in the buried in those goddamned books?!

CAMILLA

How long are you going to play soldier?
She turns and starts to walk away again.

JIM

You might as well have gone through with that sentence. I doubt it would have been much worse than this gilded cage you've locked yourself in.

CAMILLA

You might as well go back to England. This isn't your fight.

JIM

Maybe not, but at least I'll never have to explain myself to my children someday.

She moves to slap him across the face then stops at the last moment. She walks past the door towards the patient ward. He follows her.

JIM

Camilla, wait! I'm sorry, I shouldn't have—
She slams the door in his face. He leans his head against the door with a sigh then reluctantly walks down the stairs.

INT HOSPITAL DAY

The hospital is crowded with patients who have just been admitted after a recent battle. The hospital staff are attending to the patients, dressing their wounds, and performing operations. The soldiers are covered in dirt, sweat, and blood and are suffering from various wounds. Camilla wipes sweat from her forehead as she turns and sees a nurse wheeling a gurney out of the room. A deceased patient lies on top of the gurney under the sheet. The deceased patient is shorter than most of the other soldiers. Camilla turns to Sister Lourdes as she walks past carrying surgical supplies.

CAMILLA

That isn't the boy from this morning?

SISTER LOURDES

Which one?

Camilla gestures to the gurney as the nurse wheels it out of the room. Sister Lourdes shakes her head with a sigh.

SISTER LOURDES

It's just too much for the young ones.

CAMILLA

You mean that he...but he was only about fourteen!

Sister Lourdes puts the surgical supplies down and starts to prep a patient for surgery.

SISTER LOURDES

They'll be plenty more where he came from before we're through. Camilla starts to help Sister Lourdes prep the patient then glances back at the door.

CAMILLA

Why do they let them enlist?

Sister Lourdes shrugs without looking up.

SISTER LOURDES

When they're too young to know what they're signing up for they're easier to recruit.

Camilla looks around her at the patients, many of whom appear to be in their teens, then resumes assisting Sister Lourdes.

INT CAMILLA'S ROOM NIGHT

Camilla enters her room and changes out of her bloodstained nursing uniform into one of her old dresses. She tosses the uniform onto the bed in disgust and looks under the bed. She removes a suitcase from under the bed and places her belongings into it. She walks to the door then turns around and walks to the nightstand. She removes a pen and piece of paper from the nightstand and writes a note. She props the note up on the nightstand and exits with the suitcase.

INT MEDICAL TENT DAY

Jim is in the medical tent with a clipboard taking inventory of the regiment's medical supplies. Juan is recovering in a bed at the far end of the tent. Carlos is sitting in a chair next to Juan's bed as they talk. Carlos stands and turns to leave.

CARLOS

Just try not to drive the nurses too crazy. We need them to remember *some* of their work, right, Juanito?

Juan nods and laughs.

JUAN

Adios Carlos.

Jim walks to a desk at the front of the medical tent and starts comparing lists of what the regiment has and needs.

CARLOS

Adios.

Carlos approaches Jim's desk.

CARLOS

Make sure you add morphine to that list, and—
Jim looks up.

CARLOS

Well, if it isn't the brave brigadier.
Jim nods a brief acknowledgement.

JIM

Senor.

CARLOS

I thought you'd be riding off to glory by now.
Jim clears his throat in agitation.

JIM

Just as soon as this bum arm's fixed; the setting didn't take
the first time.

CARLOS

Then back in the saddle? You've got more guts than some of these
foreigners; I've seen some catch a train home after the first
sign of—

A dowdy, middle-aged nurse approaches Carlos.

NINA

I'm sorry, but you'll have to save the chatter for later; we
have too much work here as it is.

CARLOS

Nina, you aren't kicking me out are you?

NINA

I'm sorry, Capitan Vega, but—

CARLOS

(To Jim) Isn't that just like a woman? (To Nina) I trek all the
way over here to see your charming face and this is what I get?
Nina blushes then composes herself when she sees Jim struggling
to stifle a laugh.

NINA

I'm too old to be taken in by a rascal like you, now—

CARLOS

Alright, my broken-heart and I are going.
Nina walks to one of the beds and starts checking on a patient.
Carlos turns to leave.

JIM

So much for just another volunteer.
Carlos turns around.

JIM

You're *the* Captain Vega?

CARLOS

Well, that all depends...

JIM

The same Captain Vega who found a mole in the Republic's police
headquarters, the same Captain Vega who stopped that ammunition
shipment from Italy, the same—
Carlos puts his hands up in surrender.

CARLOS

Alright, you've got me.

JIM

Well then, what brings you here? Shouldn't you be at the Ministry of War right now?

Carlos shrugs.

CARLOS

I go where the job leads me. Besides, even government stooges like to make a social call once in a while.

Carlos sees Nina shaking her head as she looks up from dressing a patient's wound.

CARLOS

Make sure you get that morphine. And keep an eye on Juanito for me.

Carlos turns to leave.

JIM

Captain Vega.

Carlos turns around. Jim extends his hand.

JIM

For whatever its worth, thank you for all you've been doing. Carlos shrugs.

CARLOS

I'm sure you'd do the same. They shake hands.

CARLOS

I'm supposed to be meeting some friends at El Gitano's tonight. You're welcome to stop by.

JIM

Thank you, captain.

CARLOS

Adios.

Carlos exits the tent. Jim watches him leave in awe then quickly returns to his work when he sees Nina approaching.

INT BOARDINGHOUSE DAY

Camilla enters the run-down boardinghouse that she is now living in. The boarding house contains a small parlor with worn furniture and a staircase leading to the apartments upstairs. Camilla walks up the stairs as she looks through her mail. Consuela sneaks up the stairs past her carrying a small bag. Anita enters at the top of the stairs, shaking her head.

ANITA

Just the girl I was looking for.

CONSUELA

(Quickly and overly sweet) Well Anita, how are you? As much as I'd love to chat I just—

Consuela reaches the top of the stairs and starts to walk past her. Anita grabs the bag, pulling Consuela back.

CONSUELA

What gives?

Anita pulls the bag away from Consuela and removes a new hat.

ANITA

I knew it.

CONSUELA

I borrowed it from a friend.

Anita finds the price tag on the hat.

ANITA

Borrowed, huh? Alright then, where's my money, Consuela?

CONSUELA

That again? I already told you, I'll have it by the end of the month.

ANITA

It *is* the end of the month.

Anita takes the hat and puts it on her head. Consuela tries to grab it back.

ANITA

Now, now, it's just a bit of collateral. Unless you want me to tell Senora Avila that you were the one who forgot to put out your cigarette when the couch caught fire last month.

Consuela sighs and walks down the hall, muttering to herself.

Camilla claps as she continues up the stairs.

CAMILLA

Bravo! Another expert maneuver.

ANITA

I'd rather the cash, but I'll take it.

Camilla reaches the top of the stairs. Anita follows Camilla to her apartment.

INT CAMILLA'S APARTMENT DAY

Anita follows Camilla into the apartment. The apartment is small and contains a bed, a desk, a small worn sofa and a small coffee table.

ANITA

How's the job search been going?

Anita removes the hat and tosses it aside as they enter Camilla's room. Camilla hangs up her coat with a sigh.

CAMILLA

Same old line, "Sorry, senora, but we need people with experience".

Anita sits down and lounges across the sofa.

ANITA

And so goes the resounding refrain.

CAMILLA

How are things down at the paper?

Camilla sits down with a sigh.

ANITA

Funny you should mention that.
Anita sits up.

ANITA

Word in the office is we're about to be short staffed. So, with
a good word from me...
Camilla starts to get out of the chair.

CAMILLA

That would be too perfect! Better hours, no more breaking my
back...

Camilla pauses then sits back down with a sigh.

CAMILLA

What am I saying? I don't have newspaper experience.

ANITA

Who says you need any? It's just an errand girl job; fetch some
files, do some paper work and go home. It's a cinch!

CAMILLA

With a job like that I could...even if it wasn't much I'd still
have time to get a night job if I-

SENORA AVILA

(From the hallway) Senorita Fuentes?!
Anita stretches and stands.

ANITA

And that would be the old hag wanting her rent.

CAMILLA

Tell her I'm out.

ANITA

Will do. And I'll be sure to mention you to the boss tomorrow.

CAMILLA

Thank you so much, Anita, I-

SENORA AVILA

(From the hallway) Senorita Fuentes!

ANITA

That's my cue. Here we go again.

Anita exits as Camilla sorts through her desk, searching for
money to pay her rent.

INT MADRID BAR DAY

Reg and Jim are sitting at a table in the Madrid bar they
visited when they first arrived in Spain. Reg looks tired and is
in need of a shave. Jim takes a swig of his beer.

REG

And how's life as a desk-jockey treating you?
Jim shrugs.

JIM

It's one way to kill time; beats rotting in that hospital anyway.

REG

Sounds like you've gotten yourself a pretty sweet deal worked out.

JIM

If you like pushing paper all day, but trust me, once I get back out there—

REG

I wouldn't be rushing to get back if I were you.

Jim looks taken back. Reg wearily meets Jim's eyes and shakes his head. Reg takes a swig of his drink and forces a smile.

REG

I mean, you are serving an important function after all.

JIM

You're a good friend Reg, but you don't have to pretend.

Reg nods and starts to stare ahead blankly. Jim turns to follow his gaze and sees an attractive woman walking away from the bar.

JIM

Some things never change, eh Reg?

Jim whistles.

JIM

Not bad. Reminds me a bit of that woman back at the hospital I was telling you about.

As Jim is talking Reg looks up and sees a little girl where the woman was standing. The girl is wearing ragged clothes and covered in scratches and bruises. The girl wipes tears from her eyes as she looks around the room in confusion.

JIM

Maybe not as pretty a face though. I'm telling you, I don't know how she did it; all that time working in a grubby hospital and I never saw a bit of dirt or sweat on her. She must have been washing her face in that holy water or something...

Reg starts to sweat as he watches the girl wander around the room calling for her parents.

JIM

What wouldn't I have given to see her slip out of that uniform. Jim chuckles at himself. Reg swallows hard as the girl turns and stares at him. Jim looks at Reg and sees that he is anxiously staring ahead. He follows Reg's gaze and sees an empty space between two tables.

JIM

Reg?

Reg looks to Jim.

REG

What?

Reg looks again and sees that the girl has disappeared.

REG

Oh, sure.

JIM

You feeling alright? You seem a little off today.

REG

Just tired, I guess.

JIM

Yea, you look tired.

REG

I haven't been able to get much sleep lately; got to keep on the ready and all.

JIM

I bet. It's like Carlos was just saying...

Reg slams his glass onto the table in irritation.

REG

Carlos?

Jim takes a swig of his drink and nods.

JIM

Yea, you know, Captain Vega.

REG

(Flatly) Oh, right.

JIM

Why do you say it like that?

REG

Like what?

JIM

Like you want to spit out a bad taste in your mouth.

REG

Well, when you look like you want to spit, it's usually because...

JIM

What's your problem with him anyway? Without him we'd still be falling back while Franco—

REG

We are falling back.

JIM

What do you mean?

REG

(Sarcastically) So we have a victory or two under our belts, whoopee! We're still no better equipped to go against Franco then we were the day we got here.

JIM

Maybe your regiment just hasn't gotten the supplies yet. I know that—

REG

Oh, right, you must know because you see so much action twiddling your thumbs at your desk. (Pauses) That's just a cute little white lie they like to tell to keep morale up.

JIM

They might be small victories, but without Carlos' help we wouldn't even have those. Even you must know about all the traitors he's brought in.

REG

Right, even a poor slob like me knows about how he likes to drag entire families out of their houses like they're criminals.

JIM

When they turn their backs on an elected democracy that's exactly what they are.

REG

All I'm saying is that the Nationalists don't have a monopoly on bastards.

JIM

What's happened to you anyway? You know, sometimes I think you've forgotten why we're here.

REG

Well, at least I haven't forgotten how to call things by their right names.

A Waitress approaches the table. Reg places several pesetas onto the table and stands.

REG

Keep the change.

Jim watches Reg exit the bar as he pays the Waitress.

INT WAITING ROOM AT LA PRESNA DIARIA DE MADRID DAY

The room contains several chairs and a desk at which a secretary sits answering calls. The sounds of talking and typewriters can be heard coming from the main office. Camilla is seated in one of the chairs and alternates between anxiously looking around the waiting room and checking her watch. She is wearing a worn skirt and blouse. After a few moments she smooths her skirt and hair and checks her makeup. The secretary hangs up the phone.

SECRETARY

Senor Cansino will be with you in a few minutes, senora.

Camilla nods and checks her watch. The secretary takes a copy of the newspaper off of her desk and hands it to Camilla.

SECRETARY

Would you like something to read while you wait?

Camilla stands and takes the newspaper.

CAMILLA

Thank you.

Camilla starts flipping through the pages of the newspaper. A few moments later, Senor Cansino enters the waiting room from his office. He starts to walk into the main office.

SECRETARY

Senor Cansino.

He turns around.

SECRETARY

Senora Montes is here to see you.

He looks confused then nods with a sigh.

SENOR CANSINO

(To Camilla) Senorita Fuentes referred you?

Camilla nods and he walks to his office, holding the door open for her.

SENOR CANSINO

Shall we then?

Camilla follows him into the office, taking the newspaper with her.

INT SENOR CANSINO'S OFFICE DAY

The office contains two chairs and a desk littered with newspaper clippings, office memos, and photos. Camilla looks for a place to sit down and sees that a large stack of papers is covering the chair in front of her. He sits down at his desk with a sigh.

SENOR CANSINO

Feel free to sit down, just put the papers anywhere.

She puts the papers aside and sits down.

SENOR CANSINO

So you're Anita's friend?

CAMILLA

Yes. I've brought my resume and...

SENOR CANSINO

I'm sorry, senora, but I don't think we'll have a position for you after all.

CAMILLA

But Anita said-

SENOR CANSINO

I know, but I'm afraid that she spoke too soon. We've made some negotiations and Rosa won't be leaving after all. I apologize for any inconvenience.

CAMILLA

I see. (Pauses) Could you at least take a look, maybe in the future-

She hands him her resume. He scans the resume and puts it aside.

SENOR CANSINO

With our current finances it's very unlikely that we'll be able to hire anytime soon. I'm sorry.

CAMILLA

But you can't be sure. Couldn't you at least keep it on file?

He sighs and reluctantly puts the resume in a desk drawer. She looks around the office.

CAMILLA

What about domestic help? It's obvious that you have no one to come in and clean.

SENOR CANSINO

We have a very able woman who comes in twice a week. She looks around the office again, surprised.

CAMILLA

Twice a week?

SENOR CANSINO

I don't let her in my office.

CAMILLA

I see.

SENOR CANSINO

I'm sorry, senora. I'll let you know if we have any openings.

CAMILLA

Thank you for your time.

They shake hands and she exits the office.

INT WAITING ROOM AT LA PRESNA DIARIA DE MADRID DAY

Camilla stops at the secretary's desk and puts the newspaper on the desk.

SECRETARY

That was last week's edition, you can keep it.

Camilla takes the newspaper and walks to the door then stops for a moment. She makes several notes on the newspaper and rushes back into Senor Cansino's office.

INT SENOR CANSINO'S OFFICE DAY

SENOR CANSINO

Senora, I already told you that—

CAMILLA

I know, and I wouldn't have bothered you if I didn't know that you needed me.

SENOR CANSINO

I cannot afford—

She spreads the newspaper, now scattered with notes and corrections, across his desk.

CAMILLA

Your secretary told me that this edition was released last week, but just look at the errors.

SENOR CANSINO

So *that* was Rosa's way of getting back at me for the pay-cut.

CAMILLA

And what an excellent way to destroy your credibility. A few more issues like these and all the work that goes into this newspaper will be—

He folds up the newspaper and tosses it onto a pile on his desk.

SENOR CANSINO

I appreciate your concern, but what makes you any better for the job than Rosa? You didn't list any newspaper experience on your resume.

CAMILLA

(Desperate) I need this job. I know writing the way that other women know housekeeping, I—

SENOR CANSINO

Why don't you just try one of the factories?

CAMILLA

It wouldn't be enough, ever since my husband died—

SENOR CANSINO

Died?

She nods.

SENOR CANSINO

Anita didn't tell me that you were a widow.

She sits down with a sigh.

CAMILLA

It happened in the war.

SENOR CANSINO

I'm so sorry for your loss. What a shame, a young woman like you shouldn't have her heart in the grave.

She notices him looking her up and down and looks away. She then crosses her legs and leans forward as she raises her eyes.

CAMILLA

I won't pretend I haven't been *lonely*, senor.

She stands and walks to the door.

CAMILLA

Thank you for your time. I appreciate you're meeting with me.

She turns and starts to open the door. He rushes ahead of her and closes the door.

SENOR CANSINO

Let's not be hasty.

She turns around.

SENOR CANSINO

I *might* have a spot for you.

He looks at his watch.

SENOR CANSINO

I have a meeting in a few minutes; why don't we discuss the details over dinner tonight?

She removes a pen from her purse and writes her address on his hand.

CAMILLA

Is eight alright?

He nods.

CAMILLA

Let me know if you need help finding the place.
She starts to open the door then turns around.

CAMILLA

I'll be waiting.
She exits the office.