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UWI

Written by

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UWI is Universe War One.  
The story of World War One  
in the space-aged setting  
of the future.

November 23, 2016

FADE IN:

EXT. SARAJEVO, BOSNIA - EARLY MORNING

A slow procession of dignitary vehicles hover through one of the main streets among the daily traffic of land vehicles, hover cars and sky taxis.

ANNA

(V.O.)

I can't tell you how honored I am to be able to ride with you in your car, your Highness.

INT. THE SECOND DIGNITARY HOVER VEHICLE - EARLY MORNING

Inside the luxurious vehicle are THE ARCHDUKE, an Austrian man in his late forties, dressed in full diplomatic uniform; THE DUCHESS, a lovely Hungarian lady in her mid forties, also dressed in formal attire; a driver and ANNA, a young German lady dressed in a sleek ball room gown.

THE ARCHDUKE

The honor is ours. My wife is a big fan of your fashion reports.

ANNA

Yes. I'm your friendly fashion reporter. I can't imagine all the other real reporters who'd love to trade places with me right now.

THE ARCHDUKE

All the other reporters are not welcomed. So negative. Of course, with all the unrest in the world today, who can blame them. But there'll be no negatively today.

ANNA

Well, I just can't believe I'm here.

THE DUCHESS

It's a rarity for me too. You know, normally I'm not allowed to ride in the same car as The Archduke.

ANNA

But the two of you are married.

THE ARCHDUKE

Because of the formalities of being so close to the Austrian throne I can only marry another Royal. And although her family was very wealthy, she was not a Royal.

THE DUCHESS

But we were in love.

THE ARCHDUKE

And still very much so.

They KISS.

THE ARCHDUKE (CONT'D)

You see, it was either denounce the throne and give up my heir to succession or to compromise.

ANNA

What was the compromise?

THE DUCHESS

I am not allowed succession to the throne. When he becomes Emperor of Austria, I will be his wife, but I will not be the Empress. And since I am not royalty I am not allowed to ride in the same car.

THE ARCHDUKE

But that's in Austria. Here in Bosnia we can do as we please. Bosnia is still under our rule but for some reason the rules don't apply the same, and I can choose who I ride with. And I choose my lovely wife whenever I can.

They KISS.

ANNA

And tonight's your fourteenth wedding anniversary. So that's why you chose to celebrate such an important day in Bosnia instead of your own Austria.

THE ARCHDUKE

Yes. And what a lovely day it is. But all that is tonight.

(MORE)

THE ARCHDUKE (CONT'D)

Right now I'm supposed to attend some fancy City Hall event where I'm supposed to inspect our troops. Whatever makes the people happy, I guess.

EXT. SARAJEVO, BOSNIA - EARLY MORNING

A bomb EXPLODES and sets the procession of dignitary vehicles in disarray. The traffic stops and the hover vehicles are grounded. As the smoke clears people start to emerge from the stranded vehicles.

THE ARCHDUKE

Sophie, are you all right?

THE DUCHESS

I think so.

She has blood on her forehead. She wipes it.

THE ARCHDUKE

You're bleeding.

THE DUCHESS

It's nothing. I feel fine.

Anna emerges from the smoke.

THE ARCHDUKE

Are you hurt?

ANNA

No, your Highness. I'm fine. Are the two of you injured?

THE ARCHDUKE

I'm okay, but my wife is bleeding. We need to go to the hospital.

THE DUCHESS

I'm fine, dear.

The MAYOR, a middle-aged Bosnian man approaches.

MAYOR

Archduke Ferdinand, are you all right?

THE ARCHDUKE

Yes, I'm fine. Who are you?

MAYOR

I am the Mayor. I was riding in the car in front of you. I am so sorry for all of this. I don't know what happened.

THE ARCHDUKE

Well, this couldn't have been an accident.

MAYOR

My apologies. Of course not. Are you able to continue to City Hall?

THE ARCHDUKE

Are you serious? Of course not! My wife needs medical attention.

Emergency vehicles ARRIVE and begin treating the injured.

MAYOR

But the troops are waiting. The whole day has been planned out.

THE ARCHDUKE

As of now the plans have changed. We need to take my wife to the hospital.

THE DUCHESS

You can go on without me, dear. The soldiers are waiting. Someone else can take me to the hospital.

THE ARCHDUKE

No. On this day we stay together.

MAYOR

Of course, my apologies. You are right. Of course.

He motions to an undamaged hover vehicle. The doors open. Inside is a driver and POTIOREK, a muscular gentleman in suit and tie.

THE ARCHDUKE

Who are you?

POTIOREK

I am Potiorek, your Highness. Head of security.

MAYOR  
Get them to the hospital  
immediately!

The Archduke and The Duchess enter the hover vehicle. The doors CLOSE. The vehicle RIDES away.

INT. THE MAYOR'S HOVER VEHICLE - EARLY MORNING

POTIOREK  
My apologies, your Highness. As head of security I can assure you that all measures have been taken to ensure the safety of you and The Duchess.

THE ARCHDUKE  
Yes. I'm sure they have. How much further to the hospital?

POTIOREK  
Not much further, your Highness.

They continue riding for a while.

POTIOREK (CONT'D)  
(to the Driver)  
Stop. Turn around.

A YOUNG SERBIAN MAN from outside the vehicle aims a weapon at the vehicle and FIRES TWICE. The bullets PIERCE through the windows of the vehicle. A security team from another vehicle WRESTLE the Serbian man to the ground.

POTIOREK (CONT'D)  
(to the Driver)  
Hurry, now. To the hospital.  
What's wrong with you!  
(to The Archduke)  
Are the two of you all right?

The hover vehicle violently SPEEDS along. The Archduke looks down at the fallen Duchess.

THE ARCHDUKE  
My God, you've been shot.

Blood drips from his lips.

THE DUCHESS  
I think you've been shot too.

He wipes the blood from his mouth, but more blood comes out. She closes her eyes.

THE ARCHDUKE

Dear Sophie, don't die. Stay alive for the children. I love you.

POTIOREK

(to the driver)  
Faster! We have no time to spare.

The hover vehicle SHAKES as the speed violently increases.

INT. FANCY HOTEL BALL ROOM - MORNING

Anna is sitting at one of the chairs, dressed in her formal gown, waiting with nothing to do. The hotel workers are preparing for tonight's wedding anniversary event. The RESTAURANT MANAGER, dressed in clean formal attire, approaches her.

RESTAURANT MANAGER

Excuse me, are you the fashion reporter that is close friends with The Archduke and his wife?

ANNA

Yes. But I'm not that close. We've only recently met.

He hands her a small digital note pad.

RESTAURANT MANAGER

I am the manager of this hotel. It is so sad. I cannot tell my staff. If you would please.

She takes the pad and reads it. He motions to the microphone stand.

ANNA

Oh dear God.

She walks up to the microphone.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Hello, everyone. I need your attention. As you know we are all preparing for the big celebration of the fourteenth wedding anniversary of the Archduke and his wife. Please, everyone. Please stop what you're doing.

(MORE)

## ANNA (CONT'D)

I have some very sad news to tell you. Please stop. The Archduke and his wife were shot this morning. They were rushed to the hospital. But there was nothing the doctors could do. At eleven thirty this morning, just a few minutes ago, they both passed away. Exactly fourteen years from the day they were married. I just received the news now. There will be no celebration tonight.

## EXT. THE ROYAL PALACE IN VIENNA, AUSTRIA - DAY

A tall and heavily fortified castle with intricate carvings engraved throughout the tall, vertical metallic columns. Patrolling hover vehicles circle the palace.

## INT. THE ROYAL COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

Seated around a large table are seven elderly European gentlemen dressed in the formal attire of their roles: At the head of the conference table is THE EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA dressed in formal royal attire. The other men consist of AUSTRIAN CHIEF OF ARMED FORCES dressed in decorated military uniform, AUSTRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER dressed in suit and tie, PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRIA dressed in suit and tie, PRIME MINISTER OF HUNGARY dressed in suit and tie, GERMAN AMBASSADOR dressed in suit and tie and AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR TO SERBIA dressed in suit and tie.

## AUSTRIAN CHIEF OF ARMED FORCES

We must mobilize our troops immediately. These things take time and we cannot delay.

## AUSTRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

I highly disagree. The public opinion must first be prepared. There is already great tensions between our country and Serbia.

## AUSTRIAN CHIEF OF ARMED FORCES

What the Austrian Foreign Minister does not understand is that troop mobilization takes time. And while he waits for public opinion, the enemy could already be mounting their forces.



## AUSTRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

And what the Austrian Chief of Armed Forces does not understand is they are not our enemy yet. Mobilization could be what escalates the situation into war.

## EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA

If there is war, can we count on the support from our German ally?

## GERMAN AMBASSADOR

Germany fully supports whatever actions you decide to take, your Royal Highness. My Emperor, Wilhelm the Second has assured me our full military support to Austria-Hungary. Germany will support you fully.

## EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA

Prime Minister of Austria?

## PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRIA

I can only hope that the criminal inquiry would provide proper basis for such an extreme act. Do we really want to go to war with Serbia?

## AUSTRIAN CHIEF OF ARMED FORCES

(Laughs)

Serbia is a small country with a small military. No match for the Austrian army, especially with the assistance of the Imperial German forces.

## EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA

Prime Minister of Hungary?

## PRIME MINISTER OF HUNGARY

I am opposed to war. After all, the assassination was just an angry act of a few Serbian thugs. It was not commissioned by the Serbian government or by the Serbian people.

## AUSTRIAN CHIEF OF ARMED FORCES

We do not know that.

EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA  
You are our Ambassador to Serbia?

AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR TO SERBIA  
Yes, your Royal Highness.

EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA  
We will draft a formal document for you to deliver to Serbia. Make sure they understand that we have the full military support of the Germans. Don't let them sit on it. They must respond within two days after receiving it. Failure to respond will be understood as nonacceptance to the terms.

AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR TO SERBIA  
Yes, your Royal Highness. I will deliver it in person.

EXT. FANCY HOTEL - DAY

International reporters are giving their video reports while standing outside the hotel. They all have the same basic equipment: The major reporters are recorded by a cameraman holding a sophisticated, large video recorder assisted by small hovering robotic cameras to the side. The minor reporters are recorded only by one to three small hovering robotic cameras.

MAJOR REPORTER #1  
(Looking at his cameraman)  
And so what was supposed to be a happy event turned into a tragedy. Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the apparent heir to the Austrian-Hungary throne was assassinated alongside his wife by a small group of Serbian dissidents.

MAJOR REPORTER #2  
It was a tragic event. And it happened on the very day of their fourteenth wedding anniversary. Friends of the royal couple told us that they were always happy and still very much in love. And even in their final moments they remained embraced together to the very end.

## MINOR REPORTER

(Looking at one of three  
of his hover cameras)

Some say this was expected. A restrictive upper-class autocracy ruling a poor and racially diverse area with no understanding of the people they govern. After months of protests and being ignored, it was just a matter of time before some kind of violence would ensue.

## ANNA

(Looking at her single  
hover camera)

Hello. This is Anna Johanson, your friendly fashion reporter. I am here at the Hotel Bosnia where a celebration was supposed to take place last night for a very lovely couple in which I had the honor of knowing for only a very brief moment. They were killed in a senseless shooting. A very senseless shooting. I was originally supposed to report to you about the elegant fashion of the international upper-class. It was supposed to be a very light and fun evening. But instead, I have to say, I am devastated. I am just devastated. Such a loss. Such a senseless loss. I have no fashion to report to you today. I am sorry. And now there's even talk of war. Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie were killed yesterday by a Serbian man in a violent protest against the Austro-Hungarian Empire. I guess what he thought he was doing was right. But I can't see any sense or reason to it. My apologies for this report. I know you were expecting a fashion commentary instead of coverage of an assassination that all the other news feeds are doing. But I have no fashion news for you today. This is Anna Johanson, your sad fashion reporter. Beautiful fashion for a beautiful world.

EXT. FUTURISTIC EUROPEAN TRAIN - DAY

The train of connected cars speeds left to right quietly along a smooth, long stretch of track.

INT. FUTURISTIC EUROPEAN TRAIN CAR - DAY

The Austrian Ambassador to Serbia rides alone in his compartment. He is dressed in suit and tie and is talking into his hand-held communicator.

AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR TO SERBIA

(into his communicator)

Did you receive it? The list of demands from Emperor Franz Joseph. Yes, I am sorry to push it. Our two governments have had good relations up until this point. But the clock starts now. The Emperor was very adamant on this. We need a response from you in two days. Not a second more. Yes. I am on the train now. I will reach you shortly. I'll be there in person to work with you, answer any questions you might have and help you any way I can so that we can resolve this situation in the most beneficial way for both our governments. Okay, I will see you soon. Good bye.

EXT. SERBIAN PALACE - DAY

Smaller than the Austrian palace but just as impressive in design.

INT. SERBIAN PALACE, LOBBY ENTRANCE - DAY

A large room, royally decorated. The Austrian Ambassador to Serbia is stopped by a ROYAL SERBIAN GREETER.

ROYAL SERBIAN GREETER

I'm sorry, Ambassador. The King is not available to meet with you today.

AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR TO SERBIA

I must see him. This is of prime importance. I am here to avert a war.

ROYAL SERBIAN GREETER  
 Yes. They received your list of  
 demands and are in council now. I  
 will let them know you are here.  
 But it is a very closed session.

The SERBIAN PRIME MINISTER, an elderly Serbian man dressed in  
 suit and tie, joins the two of them.

ROYAL SERBIAN GREETER (CONT'D)  
 (to Serbian Prime  
 Minister)  
 Prime Minister, this is...

SERBIAN PRIME MINISTER  
 (shaking hands)  
 Hello, Giesl. How are you?

AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR TO SERBIA  
 Nikola, I am here to help. Can I  
 join your session?

SERBIAN PRIME MINISTER  
 Let us speak over here.

They go to another room.

INT. SMALL WAITING ROOM - DAY

AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR TO SERBIA  
 Prime Minister Pasic, I must stress  
 to you the importance of my  
 participation in your discussions.  
 My Emperor is suggesting war. I am  
 here to help. I am here to prevent  
 a war.

SERBIAN PRIME MINISTER  
 Yes. We are working on addressing  
 your list of ultimatums. It is a  
 closed meeting, only for Serbian  
 high officials. There is really  
 nothing for you to do. I have a  
 room set up for you here if you  
 choose to stay. It is our finest  
 guest room with all the amenities  
 you can wish for.

AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR TO SERBIA  
 But Prime Minister, I must stress  
 to you the high importance of this  
 situation.

(MORE)

AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR TO SERBIA  
Emperor Franz Joseph is talking  
war. I am here to prevent a war  
between our two countries.

SERBIAN PRIME MINISTER  
Yes. We appreciate your visit.  
But there is really nothing for you  
to do but to enjoy your stay here,  
if you choose to stay. We already  
know all there is to know. We know  
of your alliance with the Imperial  
German military. But we also know  
that Germany is all you have. We  
have alliances too. In fact, I  
think we have all the others. And  
your small Austrian army and the  
German army is no match against the  
rest of the world.

AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR TO SERBIA  
If there's anything I can do.

SERBIAN PRIME MINISTER  
And we also are very much aware of  
your strict two-day time limit for  
our response. That is why I must  
get back to the discussions.

AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR TO SERBIA  
How is it looking?

SERBIAN PRIME MINISTER  
I feel confident that all your  
demands will be met. After all, we  
want to avert a war as much as you  
do.

They shake hands.

AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR TO SERBIA  
Thank you, Nikola. And please, if  
there's anything I can do.

SERBIAN PRIME MINISTER  
On behalf of King Peter and all the  
people of Serbia I wish to express  
my deepest regrets for the passing  
of the Archduke and his wife.

AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR TO SERBIA  
Thank you.

INT. SMALL HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Anna, dressed in a bath robe with her wet hair tied up, is sitting in front of a view screen in the dimly-lit room. On the view screen is a live image of CURTIS, a casually-dressed man in his mid 30s. He is the news dispatcher of her video recordings. He is looking at her.

ANNA

What do you mean my feed wasn't distributed? You mean no one saw it?

CURTIS

Sorry, Anna. You're a fashion reporter for the Universal Fashion Network, and that report had nothing to do with fashion.

ANNA

Curtis, I'm a reporter. And I was there when it happened. I was probably one of the last people who spoke with them.

CURTIS

The assassination was covered by all the other news feeds. It's been covered and over covered. And you do fashion.

ANNA

Can't you put it on one of the non-fashion feeds?

CURTIS

Maybe I could have. But not now. It's old news now. And old news is no news.

ANNA

Okay... So where am I going to next?

CURTIS

I'm not sure. I'll let you know. There's a dog show event not too far from where you are now with lots of celebrities. Maybe I'll send you there.

ANNA

(sarcastically)  
Great.

CURTIS  
Just kidding. I'll let you know.  
Something will come up.

ANNA  
Okay. Bye.

CURTIS  
Bye.

She presses a button and closes communications.

EXT. SERBIAN PALACE - NIGHT

Night turns into sunrise behind the backdrop sky of the Serbian palace.

INT. SERBIAN PALACE, LOBBY ENTRANCE - MORNING

The Austrian Ambassador to Serbia is asleep, sitting on a bench of the nearly-empty room. Everyone in the room is ignoring him. He wakes. Looks at his hand-held communicator device to check for text messages. Stands up and abruptly leaves the room.

EXT. FUTURISTIC EUROPEAN TRAIN - DAY

The train of connected cars speeds right to left quietly along a smooth, long stretch of track.

INT. FUTURISTIC EUROPEAN TRAIN CAR - DAY

The Austrian Ambassador to Serbia rides alone in his compartment. He is dressed in suit and tie and is talking into his hand-held communicator.

AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR TO SERBIA  
(into his communicator)  
Did you receive it? The Serbian response to our list of demands. Yes, it looks like they agreed to all our requests except for one. No. I don't think we should go to war because of one item. Yes, they are trying. And they did respond before the deadline. Okay, I'm on my way back home now. I'll see you soon. Good bye.



EXT. THE ROYAL PALACE IN VIENNA, AUSTRIA - DAY

The castle appears more heavily patrolled than before.

INT. THE ROYAL COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

Seated around a large table are the seven elderly European gentlemen, dressed in the same formal attire as before.

EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA

All of our terms have been met,  
except for one.

AUSTRIAN CHIEF OF ARMED FORCES

That is completely unacceptable,  
your Royal Highness.

EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA

(reading from a list)

Serbia, them, agrees to suppress  
any propaganda against the Austro-  
Hungarian Monarchy, us. To dismiss  
and punish Serbian officials  
involved in such negative  
propaganda and those involved in  
the crime on the 28th of June. To  
notify us with the official  
response within two days after the  
deliverance of the note.

PRIME MINISTER OF HUNGARY

And all those conditions have been  
either met or agreed upon by them.

EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA

(looking at the list)

To allow representatives of the  
Austro-Hungarian Monarchy full  
access in the investigation of the  
crime on the 28th of June. That,  
they will not agree to.

PRIME MINISTER OF HUNGARY

Your Royal Highness, it should have  
been a non-binding request on our  
part rather than an ultimatum.  
Their constitution and law of  
criminal procedure does not allow  
foreign participation in internal  
investigations.

AUSTRIAN CHIEF OF ARMED FORCES

Nonsense, your Royal Highness.  
They make the laws. They could  
allow it, especially if it's to  
avert a war.

EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA

Does Germany support us if we do  
decide to go to war?

GERMAN AMBASSADOR

Of course, your Royal Highness.  
Germany fully supports you.

PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRIA

Should we vote on the matter?

EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA

No. I am the Emperor. The  
decision will be mine alone. A  
direct heir to the throne has been  
assassinated. It was not just the  
act of a single man. People in the  
Serbian government were involved.  
I'm sure of it. And now they won't  
let us participate in the  
investigation. Some of their high  
officials were members of the group  
that orchestrated the  
assassination. And the Serbian  
government as a whole allowed the  
hatred and negative propaganda  
against us that lead to the  
assassination. Gentlemen, the  
decision is clear. We are at war.

(to the Austrian  
Ambassador to Serbia)

Make the formal declaration.

AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR TO SERBIA

Right away, your Royal Highness.

EXT. BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER SAVA, SERBIA - DAY

Two soldiers, BRIDGE BOMBER #1 and BRIDGE BOMBER #2, dressed  
in army combat uniforms, are installing metallic modules with  
blinking lights on the hanging supports of the bridge. An  
ELDERLY LADY with dress, sweater and walking cane looks up at  
the two bombers on the bridge.

ELDERLY LADY

Excuse me.

The two men ignore her and continue their work installing the bombs.

ELDERLY LADY (CONT'D)

I say, young men, excuse me.

BRIDGE BOMBER #1

Sorry, Ma'am. This is official military business. Please leave the area and return to your home.

ELDERLY LADY

(pointing)

That's my house over there. What are you doing?

BRIDGE BOMBER #2

We're blowing up the bridge is what we're doing, Ma'am.

ELDERLY LADY

Why are you blowing up the bridge?

BRIDGE BOMBER #2

Haven't you heard? We're at war. This is their most likely entry into Serbia. So we have to blow it up to slow them down.

ELDERLY LADY

Who are we at war with?

BRIDGE BOMBER #2

With the stuck up aristocratic Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

BRIDGE BOMBER #1

Please go home, Ma'am. There'll be people there to explain everything to you.

ELDERLY LADY

But I don't want you to blow up my bridge. I use it everyday. And what's going to happen to my house? When you blow up the bridge it'll affect all the structures around it.

BRIDGE BOMBER #1

Please return to your home. Everything will be explained to you there.

A shelling from far away WHIZZES by and creates a big SPLASH in the river beneath the bridge.

BRIDGE BOMBER #1 (CONT'D)  
Hurry, Ma'am. Go home now!

She hobbles away quickly with her cane.

BRIDGE BOMBER #2  
Shall we continue?

BRIDGE BOMBER #1  
Yes.

Another shelling WHIZZES by and hits a small tip of the bridge. The bridge swings.

BRIDGE BOMBER #1 (CONT'D)  
No. Let's get out of here.

They start climbing down the bridge.

BRIDGE BOMBER #2  
The bombs.

BRIDGE BOMBER #1  
Leave the bombs!

Another shelling WHIZZES by over the bridge and demolishes one of the nearby homes.

EXT. BOSNIAN MILITARY RIVER BOAT - DAY

In the cabin of the river boat are The RIVER BOAT CAPTAIN and the RIVER BOAT FIRST OFFICER, both dressed in naval uniforms. The River Boat First Officer is viewing the bridge with a pair of high-tech binoculars.

RIVER BOAT FIRST OFFICER  
They're climbing down the bridge,  
leaving the bombs behind. It  
doesn't look like they've been  
activated.

RIVER BOAT CAPTAIN  
Cease fire.

RIVER BOAT FIRST OFFICER  
(calling out)  
Cease fire!

RIVER BOAT CAPTAIN

I think that'll do for now. Inform  
Ordinance of the situation.

EXT. A HOUSE NEAR THE BRIDGE, SERBIA - DAY

Anna is interviewing the Elderly Lady outside the Elderly Lady's house. A small hover camera is in front of them. Several other reporters are recording their interviews with other people.

ANNA

(into the camera)

I am here with Lena Kovac who witnessed the entire event. The first shots fired between Bosnia and Serbia. Can you tell me what you saw?

ELDERLY LADY

Well, yes. There were these two young men on the bridge trying to blow it up. And then a ship over there on the river shot their cannons in our direction and almost hit us. My neighbor's house got totally destroyed.

ANNA

Do you know that your country is at war with Bosnia?

ELDERLY LADY

I didn't know then, but I do now. Austria-Hungary declared war on us. And I guess Bosnia is part of Austria-Hungary. Our army was trying to blow up the bridge so the Bosnians wouldn't be able to bring their heavy weapons across. But a Bosnian river boat fired shots and stopped the bridge from being destroyed.

ANNA

(into the hover camera)

And there you have it, Austria-Hungary has declared war against Serbia. Most likely a result of the assassination a few days ago.

(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)

This is Anna Johanson your friendly fashion reporter in Belgrade, Serbia at the site of the first shots fired on the first day of the war.

ELDERLY LADY

You're that fashion reporter, aren't you?

ANNA

That's right.

ELDERLY LADY

I watch you all the time. My two daughters love you.

ANNA

Thank you. And good luck to you here.

She walks away and heads for her make-shift tent.

EXT. SMALL MAKE-SHIFT TENT, BOSNIA - DAY

DUKE, a rugged-looking man, early 40s, dressed in hiking/cameraman gear waits for Anna outside her tent.

DUKE

You must be Anna Johanson. I'm Duke.

He shakes her hand.

ANNA

(startled)  
Hello, Duke.

DUKE

They told you about me, right?

ANNA

(confused)  
I'm sorry. No.

DUKE

Great. So what else is new.

ANNA

Do you have something for me, Duke?

DUKE  
I'm here to help you.

ANNA  
Help me? Doing what?

DUKE  
I'm here to help you get stories.

ANNA  
I have someone that does that already. Who sent you?

DUKE  
Someone named Curtis was supposed to talk to you?

ANNA  
That's my dispatcher. Duke? What's your last name?

DUKE  
No last name. Just Duke.

ANNA  
An alias?

DUKE  
No. It's a nickname. My name is Ardoyd Manukyan. It's Armenian. But everyone calls me Duke. My mother calls me Duke.

ANNA  
Okay, Duke. Wait right here.

She enters her make-shift tent. He stays outside.

INT. SMALL MAKE-SHIFT TENT, BOSNIA - DAY

Anna enters the tent and activates the view screen. Curtis appears on the screen.

ANNA  
Curtis, there's an Armenian man out here. Who is he?

CURTIS  
(excited)  
Oh, you've met Duke. Isn't he great? We're so lucky to have him.

ANNA

Why wasn't I told? He's here to help me?

CURTIS

Yeah. He's a news miracle tracker. He knows where the next big story will be. He's the best. And he chose you. Can you believe it? He's going to make you the next biggest thing. Don't be surprised if a swarm of other reporters follow you. They all try to follow him wherever he goes. And we got him.

ANNA

He's a fashion expert?

CURTIS

No. He's a news expert. Anna, there's a war going on and he knows where the next big story is. Oh, by the way, you're not a fashion reporter anymore. You're now a war correspondent. Or whatever he says you are. Just do whatever he says. This is a good thing, Anna.

ANNA

Just do whatever he says? How come I've never heard of this guy?

CURTIS

He does hard news. The important stuff. You do fashion. Or, you DID fashion. Believe me, this guy is the real deal. A real big deal.

ANNA

Okay, Curtis. Thank you.

CURTIS

Bye.

She turns off the view screen. Exits the tent.

EXT. SMALL MAKE-SHIFT TENT, BOSNIA - DAY

Anna exits the tent and confronts Duke.

ANNA

So, why me?



DUKE

You're pretty. And you already  
have a large fan base.

ANNA

Are you my boss?

DUKE

No. We're equals. Well, actually,  
you might be a little bit higher  
than me. After all, you're the  
star. I'm just the guy who holds  
the camera.

She smiles and extends her hand to him.

ANNA

Nice to meet you, Duke.

He shakes her hand.

EXT. GERMAN CHANCELLERY - DAY

Hovering patrols fly by a large, closed, rectangular fortress with the walls consisting of conjoined buildings with an open courtyard in the center. Marching troops perform drills on the ground.

INT. GERMAN CHANCELLERY - VIDEO ROOM - DAY

A large video screen, currently without an image, highlights the high-tech room. Five distinguished elderly gentlemen sit comfortably at a table facing the video screen. A dozen SUPPORTING STAFF sit and stand near the distinguished gentlemen. At the head of the table is the GERMAN EMPEROR. Standing at the table and facing the video screen is the GERMAN CHANCELLOR. All of the distinguished gentlemen are dressed formally in their fully decorated uniforms.

GERMAN SUPPORT STAFF #1

They're coming on.

The video screen turns on and a live video image of the Russian leaders in their conference room at the Russian Palace. The KING OF RUSSIA sits front and center surrounded by a handful of equally distinguishing-looking elderly gentlemen.

GERMAN CHANCELLOR

(to the video screen)

Hello, Russia, your Royal Highness  
and distinguished gentlemen.

(MORE)

GERMAN CHANCELLOR (CONT'D)

Germany greets you with warm regards, peace, goodwill and prosperity to all.

KING OF RUSSIA

Hello, Germany. You are coming in well. Russia greets you with wishes of happiness, health, and good wishes and intentions.

GERMAN EMPEROR

(abruptly)

So, what's this nonsense we're hearing about Russian troops mobilizing?

GERMAN CHANCELLOR

(embarrassed)

The Emperor is concerned that such an act may escalate an already-sensitive situation.

KING OF RUSSIA

No need to concern yourselves with that. We are mobilizing our troops, if anything, to avoid an escalation. They are merely there to keep the peace and make sure things don't get out of hand.

GERMAN EMPEROR

(angrily)

Poppycock!

GERMAN CHANCELLOR

We understand that you are allies with Serbia. We are allies with Austria. If you continue with your troop advancement it may force us to act in kind. We urge you to order your troops to return to Russia.

KING OF RUSSIA

Austria declared war on Serbia. Austria fired the first shots. We cannot sit by idly while one of our smaller allies is attacked unfairly by a larger unreasonable nation.

GERMAN CHANCELLOR

And so your intentions ARE to participate in the war?

KING OF RUSSIA

It is what it is.

GERMAN CHANCELLOR

Like I said before, if you don't order your troops to return home we will be forced to send in our troops as well.

GERMAN EMPEROR

Order your troops home! Your army is no match against ours. No country can match ours.

KING OF RUSSIA

Our troops are already moving. The war will be over by the time you get there.

GERMAN EMPEROR

It will not be over, because you will be at war with us!

(to one of the support staff)

Break communications.

The video screen goes blank.

GERMAN EMPEROR (CONT'D)

Get me the British Empire.

GERMAN CHANCELLOR

Your Royal Highness, do you think it was a good idea to cut them off like that?

GERMAN EMPEROR

It was going nowhere. They've already made up their minds to enter the war.

Live video appears on the video screen. The BRITISH PRIME MINISTER (Herbert Asquith) and two other distinguished gentlemen, all dressed in suit and tie, sit at a table.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

Hello, your Royal Highness. What can we do for you?

The German Emperor stands.

GERMAN EMPEROR

Hello, Great Britain. Salutations and good day to you all.

(MORE)

GERMAN EMPEROR (CONT'D)

I hope all is well and that your lives are full and happy.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

Yes, yes. Thank you. What can we do for you?

GERMAN EMPEROR

As you know, a war has broken out in Serbia. It's a small war, and we would like it to stay small and end without it getting any bigger.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

We know all of that. We know everything. We know the Russians are joining the war and that Germany is probably going to join as well.

GERMAN EMPEROR

We would only join the war if Russian troops attack our allies.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

Have you called upon us for council?

GERMAN EMPEROR

No. We ask that Great Britain remain neutral. We don't need the war to escalate any further.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

Keep your war to the East and Britain will remain neutral. Don't bring your hostilities to the West. And let's have a quick end to it, shall we?

GERMAN EMPEROR

Yes. That is our intention. A quick end without further escalation. Thank you, Great Britain. And may your lives be full and happy.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

Same to you, Germany. Good bye.

The video screen goes blank.

GERMAN CHANCELLOR

Well, your Royal Highness. I think that went well.

GERMAN EMPEROR

Let's hurry up and end this thing quickly.

GERMAN CHANCELLOR

Agreed.

EXT. EASTERN PRUSSIA - A BRIDGE - DAY

A large battalion of Russian soldiers march over the bridge in full military uniforms. Reporters with their hover cameras and crew stand at the side of the road making their recorded reports. Anna and Duke are among the reporters.

ANNA

Wow, so all this is because of you?

DUKE

No. Just the reporters. I had nothing to do with the soldiers.

He puts the video camera to his face and points it at her. Two hovering cameras float into position.

DUKE (CONT'D)

Okay. We're live.

Anna looks into the camera. The Russian troops continue moving by her.

ANNA

Hello, this is Anna Johanson your friendly war correspondent. I am standing here next to a bridge in Eastern Prussia where, as you can see behind me, Russian soldiers are on the move. The Russians are on the side of Serbia, which is currently at war with Bosnia and the whole Austro-Hungarian Empire. A small war which sparked some fighting and was about to end has now gotten bigger with the entry of Russia. However, it is strange that they are on the move in Eastern Prussia, far away from the Serbian/Bosnian border.

She receives a piece of paper.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I've just been handed a note.

(reads the note)

Germany has just declared war on Russia.

(into the camera)

Which makes more sense since the Russian troops appear to be moving toward Germany and not the Serbian/Bosnian border. So, you heard it here first. Russia and Germany with their huge armies have now joined the war. The little war that started a few days ago has now become something much bigger. I will be sending you more information as things develop. You will know them as we know them. This is Anna Johanson your friendly war correspondent in Eastern Prussia. The war has just gotten bigger.

She stands frozen while continuing to look into the camera.

DUKE

Okay. We're out.

ANNA

Make sure to get that to Curtis right away. We don't want to be beat, especially when they're all just following you anyway.

DUKE

Get what out to Curtis?

ANNA

The feed.

DUKE

It was live. You beat them. You were first. Russia and Germany entered the war, and the world heard about it from you first.

ANNA

It was live? Why didn't you tell me?

DUKE

Don't worry. You did great.

ANNA  
That's right. I did, didn't I? We  
did great.

Duke starts putting away the equipment.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
Where to next?

DUKE  
Belgium.

ANNA  
Belgium? What's happening there?

DUKE  
It's the war on the other end.  
(looks around)  
But don't tell anyone.

ANNA  
(happily excited)  
Let's go.

EXT. THE BELGIUM/GERMAN BORDER - DAY

There is no fighting as hundreds of scattered soldiers on each side of the border move toward the front line. Both sides facing each other. Large groups of reporters with their cameramen, crew and hover cameras gather on the side as one large group. The soldiers are dressed in their military uniforms. The reporters are dressed in their casual and formal civilian attire, with many of them wearing helmets and protective vests. Large cannons and ground weapons are being set up by each side aimed in the direction of the other side. Anna is wearing a protective vest. She and Duke are with some other civilians away from the large group of reporters.

ANNA  
(to the camera)  
Hello. This is Anna Johanson your  
friendly war correspondent. We are  
here on the border between Germany  
and Belgium on what may be the  
first major battle of the war.

Camera slowly pans the area.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
As you can see there are hundreds,  
maybe even thousands of soldiers  
with their massive and devastating  
weapons aimed at each other.  
(MORE)

## ANNA (CONT'D)

On the sidelines are us reporters, some historians and a few civilians. We are all at risk, of course, because once the fighting starts no one is safe. According to the Universal Peace Accords medical technicians, reporters and civilians are protected from being fired upon as long as they carry no weapons. And so all of us here on the side are unarmed and unprotected from direct attack. Firing on an unarmed civilian is a war crime. But who knows what will happen once the fighting starts. I am here with Karen Steed a Historian for the Universal Institute of Records.

KAREN STEED, a European woman in her mid fifties, wearing a protective helmet and vest joins Anna in front of the camera.

## KAREN

Hello.

## ANNA

Now, Karen, I'm a reporter and you're a historian. We're both here observing and recording the event. But we both have different accesses and restrictions.

## KAREN

That's right, Anna. You, as a reporter, have no special access. But you are able to broadcast what you see to everyone immediately. I, as a historian, have all access to everything, even top secret situations. But nothing we see or record can be divulged until we get the go ahead from the Universal Peace Accord Committee, which is expected to be about a year after the end of the war.

## ANNA

So, a year after the end of the war we get to see everything you've recorded? Even the top secret stuff?



KAREN

The public will probably only see the highlights. The recordings are mostly for historians and academia. As far as the public goes, they'll probably see some of the recordings edited in the form of documentaries.

ANNA

That's very interesting. And I understand these recordings can't be used against anyone.

KAREN

That's right. If you're about to commit a war crime it's best to do it with a historian recording your actions. If you are tried for that war crime afterwards, not only can the recordings not be used against you, but you can claim that the recordings unfairly aided the prosecution, and that will be in your favor.

ANNA

That's very interesting.

KAREN

Yes. The historians fought hard for that one. In the past, war crimes were committed, but they were all hearsay and paper trails. Now, we're hoping to get some good recordings for posterity.

ANNA

So, this is the first war where historians will be included in this way?

KAREN

Yes. You see, in past wars, after governments have changed and several generations have passed, we realized that most of the political gains and losses were merely fleeting. Steadfast enemies became friends and former allies became future rivals. The only thing that lasted and mattered was the history.

(MORE)

KAREN (CONT'D)

But during war time, capturing history was the least of anyone's concern. So, during the last Universal Peace Accords us historians pushed for a special provision for official historians to be able to record the events for posterity.

ANNA

So, you have to be an official historian sanctioned by the Universal Peace Accord Committee?

KAREN

That's right.

ANNA

So what's involved in the qualifications and training of being an official historian for the war?

Anna and Karen flinch as a LOUD BLAST from one of the plasma cannons is fired. This is followed by several quick BLASTS from the other side. Each powerful offensive weapon is blocked on the other side by its specific counter measure. The defense of photon blasts are electro-magnetic force fields which deflects the direction of the blasts. The defense of laser beams are hovering mirrors which reflect the light back to its source. The defense of large projectiles are small countermeasure projectiles which obliterate the large incoming projectiles. The defense of small projectiles are lightweight hand-held shields. But there is no single, powerful forcefield that shields against all weapons. Most of the effective fighting are small weapons and hand to hand combat. It is not until the counter measures of one side is depleted that the large weapons take affect.

ANNA (CONT'D)

(shouting)

As you can see and hear, something is happening.

Camera slowly pans across the scene of destruction.

ANNA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Oh my God! Get down!

Anna quickly puts on her helmet. The Germans charge at the Belgians while both sides FIRE their cannons and heavy guns at each other. Several plasma bursts deflect off the opposing force fields and HIT the crowd of civilians and reporters and WIPES OUT half of them.

ANNA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 This is terrible! Civilians are  
 being killed!

German soldiers march into Belgium along with their hover  
 trucks and cannons. The few remaining Belgian soldiers  
 retreat and scatter away from the battle.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
 (to the cameraman)  
 Are you all right?  
 (to Karen)  
 Karen, are you all right?

KAREN  
 I'm okay.  
 (looking into the crown of  
 civilians)  
 Oh my God. They're all dead.

ANNA  
 It looks like most of them. As you  
 can see a stray plasma burst hit  
 the crowd of spectators. The  
 Belgian soldiers appear to be  
 retreating and the German soldiers  
 are marching into Belgium, headed  
 toward France.  
 (to Karen)  
 Are you sure you're okay?

KAREN  
 (in shock)  
 But for the grace of God, that  
 could have been us.

German soldiers RUSH pass them as they move into Belgium.

ANNA  
 (to the cameraman)  
 Let's move back. We're still in  
 danger here.

KAREN  
 That could've been us.

Anna guides her along while comforting her.

ANNA  
 Come on, Karen. We're moving to  
 someplace safer.  
 (to the cameraman)  
 Stop recording.

DUKE (O.S.)  
We're live. Do your sign out.

ANNA  
Just stop recording.

INT. FRANCE - VIDEO CONFERENCE ROOM

At a table next to a large video screen are the FRENCH PRESIDENT, FRENCH PRIME MINISTER, Several Commanders of the French military and supporting staff. Live video appears on the video screen. The British Prime Minister and two other distinguished gentlemen, all dressed in suit and tie, sit at a table.

FRENCH PRIME MINISTER  
(to the video screen)  
Hello Great Britain. Glorious Britain. God bless the Royal Family and the wonderful citizens of the United Kingdom. May your nation prosper, and may joy--

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
(interrupting)  
Cut the long introduction, France. We know what's going on. Germany entered Belgium and are headed for France. What we want to know is what you intend to do about it?

FRENCH PRIME MINISTER  
Mister Prime Minister, it looks like Belgium alone is no match for Germany's armies. We will, of course, have to intervene. But with Britain's assistance we could get the job done faster.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
That's out of the question. Britain is neutral. Why don't you ask the Americans?

FRENCH PRIME MINISTER  
The Americans are also neutral. The Americans have nothing to lose if Germany takes over all of Europe. But Britain has a lot to lose if you don't help us.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
What do you mean?

FRENCH PRESIDENT

Mister Prime Minister, the German armies are coming to France by way of Belgium. If they defeat us, Britain will be next. We could either work together Belgium, France and Great Britain now to stop the German threat. Or you could deal with Germany alone after Germany has defeated us without your help.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

As of now, Britain is neutral. But we will get back to you.

He closes communications and the video screen goes dark.

FRENCH PRESIDENT

(to the France Prime  
Minister)

What do you think?

FRENCH PRIME MINISTER

I think they're in.

EXT. BELGIUM - HILL TOPS OUTSIDE OF THE CITY OF LIEGE - DAY

Reporters and other civilians are gathered along the hill tops that surround the city of Liege. They look down at the city and the twelve forts that circle the outer edge of the city. The forts are protecting the city with force field generators and photon cannons. German soldiers with their large photon cannons are ATTACKING the forts in a barrage of CONSTANT FIRING. Their weapons are unable to penetrate the force field dome over the city generated by the forts.

ANNA

(to the cameraman)

This is Anna Johanson your friendly war correspondent. We are here in Belgium outside the city of Liege. This is the siege of Liege where German soldiers are trying to enter the city and overtake it.

Camera pans at the nearby spectators

ANNA (CONT'D)

I am here with other reporters and civilians high above the city at a safe distance from the battle field below.

The camera looks downward into the city. There is constant firing of the german photon cannons and other weapons. The powerful force field deflect the photon bursts and prevents any harm from entering the city. Bright sparks of light and smoke build up outside the dome-shaped force field.

ANNA (CONT'D)

It looks like more of a beating than a battle. Twelve forts with force field generators surround the city and are currently protecting it from the constant destructive forces of the powerful German weapons. The forts with their force field generators were designed to protect the city from the blasts of photon cannons. Right now the city appears to be unharmed among the chaos and violence outside the area of protection by the forts. The Germans are firing freely into the protected city with almost no return fire from Liege of any kind. So far the force field and the other defensive counter measures appear to be working, but it won't last forever. It'll only be a matter of time before the Germans break through.

Anna enters the frame

ANNA (CONT'D)

We have just received word that the French military is considering aiding the Belgians against Germany. That only makes sense since France appears to be Germany's next target, and they would want to stop Germany before the war enters their country. But right now at the siege of Liege the Belgians are under heavy attack from German forces without any assistance from any of the neighboring countries.

A large metal zeppelin hovers toward the city of Liege and parks itself at the edge of the force field.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Wait a minute. Something is happening.

(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)

There appears to be a large oval object approaching the force field.

It CRASHES into the force field.

ANNA (CONT'D)

The force field is down! It appears that the large object collided with the force field and took it down. The city is now unprotected and the Germans are entering it. The Germans have taken Liege.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BRITISH TACTICAL ROOM.

A miniaturized moving 3-D holographic city of Liege. An oval object crashes into the force field of the city bringing down the force field. Tiny german soldiers rush into the mini holographic city. The British Prime Minister and two other distinguished gentlemen, all dressed in suit and tie, stand next to the holographic model along with a BRITISH HISTORIAN, BRITISH TACTICAL OFFICER, a few aides and two small hovering recording cameras.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

Damn it, they've broken into Liege. The Germans are on their way to taking Belgium.

They watch as the invasion continues.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER (CONT'D)

What are our options?

BRITISH TACTICAL OFFICER

They will cross Belgium, and then take France, and then they will cross the channel and try and take Britain.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

They're using this small conflict between Bosnia and Serbia as an excuse to expand their territory.

He watches the invasion while thinking.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER (CONT'D)

Tactical Officer, show me the Schlieffen Plan scenario.

The Tactical Officer describes what is being shown in accelerated motion by the 3-D model.

BRITISH TACTICAL OFFICER  
Germany's Schlieffen Plan will not work. It is a precisely-timed forty-five day plan to quickly cross Belgium, take Paris, neutralizing their western threat. And then moving their troops to their Eastern front against Russia, concentrating their forces on one front at a time. The problem is, Russia already mobilized their troops and have moved quicker than the Germans anticipated and are already fighting them on their Eastern front. So their strength is weakened fighting two fronts at the same time.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
Now show me Plan Seventeen.

BRITISH TACTICAL OFFICER  
Plan Seventeen is France's plan to take back two territories that the Germans acquired forty-three years ago in the Franco-Prussian war: Alsace and Lorraine. But that plan will also not work. The French forces will be no match for the heightened German forces already on the move.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
Show both plans running simultaneously and with our involvement.

The 3-D holographic model shows chaotic and scattered fighting.

BRITISH TACTICAL OFFICER  
It'll be pure chaos. There is no way of predicting the final outcome. Strategies will be changing by the hour as each side realize their plan is not working and battalion leaders try to coordinate with each other on what to do next.



BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
What's that over there?

He points to an area in the holographic model where heavy fighting occurs and the Germans are being pushed back.

BRITISH TACTICAL OFFICER  
Well, I don't know.

He walks close to the area of interest and studies it.

BRITISH TACTICAL OFFICER (CONT'D)  
It appears to be the Americans  
pushing the Germans back.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
We need to speak to the Americans.

He leaves the room. Everyone follows him out of the room except for the Tactical Officer.

INT. BRITISH VIDEO CONFERENCE ROOM.

The British Prime Minister and the others enter the room. The video screen turns on.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
Get me the American President.

The AMERICAN RECEPTIONIST, an American woman in her 20s, dressed in professional business attire appears on the screen with a friendly smile.

AMERICAN RECEPTIONIST  
Hello, Mister Prime Minister. How  
can I help you?

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
Yes, get me your President.

AMERICAN RECEPTIONIST  
Hold on, please.

The screen switches over to a still image of the Great Seal of the United States. A live video of PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON, the president of the United States, surrounded by his staff and decorated generals sit at a conference table.

PRESIDENT WILSON  
Ahh, Prime Minister Asquith. We  
were just discussing the very  
interesting situation happening in  
your part of the world.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

As you know, Mister President, Germany is using the war as a means of conquering new territory for their own expansion.

PRESIDENT WILSON

Yes. It would appear so. And what does Great Britain intend on doing to prevent this?

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

Britain is neutral. We implore America to step in, stop the Germans and end the war quickly.

PRESIDENT WILSON

America is neutral.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

We have a very sophisticated tactical model which shows that America will eventually have to enter the war. The sooner you enter the war, the sooner the war will end. And less lives will be lost.

PRESIDENT WILSON

We've ran our own battle scenarios. Germany is fighting a war on two fronts. Russia on its east and Belgium, France and Britain on its west. The sooner you get your act together and defeat Germany, the sooner the war will end.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

And so there'll be no assistance from the Americans?

PRESIDENT WILSON

America is neutral. But you have our complete moral support.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

Let it be known that millions of deaths could have been avoided if America would've only entered the war and ended it sooner.

A few heads turn to the Historians in the rooms.

PRESIDENT WILSON  
 Playing to the Historians, Mister  
 Prime Minister?

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
 I'm just stating the obvious,  
 Mister President.

PRESIDENT WILSON  
 We will continue monitoring the  
 situation.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
 As shall we. Good bye, Mister  
 President.

PRESIDENT WILSON  
 Good bye, Mister Prime Minister.

The video screen goes dark.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
 What do you think, Historian?

The historian looks away.

BRITISH HISTORIAN  
 I'm not even here.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
 (scarcastically)  
 You're not even here. Of course  
 not. Until after the war. And  
 then the most embarrassing moments  
 compilation reel will be sold as  
 stocking stuffers come Christmas  
 time.

He looks at the blank video screen.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER (CONT'D)  
 Get me Germany.

The great seal of Germany appear on the video screen followed  
 by a live video of the video room of the German chancellery.  
 The German Chancellor, some distinguished gentlemen and  
 supporting staff appear on the screen.

GERMAN CHANCELLOR  
 Mister Prime Minister and the  
 wonderful people of Great Britain.  
 Germany welcomes you and wishes you  
 prosperity and...

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
(interrupting)  
Cut the long introduction, Germany.  
Why are you attacking Belgium?

GERMAN CHANCELLOR  
We are merely crossing Belgium.  
Belgium is attacking US.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
Why is Germany crossing Belgium?  
You told us that you were going to  
keep the war on the East and end it  
quickly.

GERMAN CHANCELLOR  
We are crossing Belgium to get to  
France and to prevent France from  
gaining an advantage on us, thus  
ending the war sooner.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
That doesn't make sense.

GERMAN CHANCELLOR  
We urge Great Britain to continue  
to remain neutral. We are doing  
everything we can to end this war  
as quickly as possible.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
Germany, you must retrieve your  
troops from your western front.  
Get out of Belgium.

GERMAN CHANCELLOR  
If you help us and attack France,  
the war will end sooner.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
That's ridiculous. We're not  
attacking France. The French are  
our allies. You must pull your  
troops out of Belgium. And do not  
engage in battle with France.

GERMAN CHANCELLOR  
We seem to be at an impasse.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
We know about your Schlieffen Plan.  
You must know by now that it's not  
working. You're already fighting a  
war on two fronts.

GERMAN CHANCELLOR

The Schlieffen Plan? I have no idea what you're talking about.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

Pull out of Belgium and I'll ensure you that France will not enter the war.

GERMAN CHANCELLOR

France is already attacking us. We're fighting them right now as we speak.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER

What?

(calling out)

Get me France!

EXT. BELGIUM - THE ARDENNES FOREST REGION - DAY

Plasma BLASTS from ground cannons and TRACER TRAILS from hand-held weapons are being FIRED on both sides against the other: French and Belgium on the left and Germany on the right. Flashes, EXPLOSIONS and smoke is everywhere among the dense forest. Anna is making a report while walking. She is dressed in full protective outfit with a helmet. Duke is following her, dressed the same way and holding the camera while recording.

ANNA

This is Anna Johanson your friendly war correspondent. We are here in the Ardennes Forest in Belgium. As you can see there is a battle going on. France has officially entered the war and is assisting Belgium in fighting against the Germans. They are trying to stop Germany from entering France. But as it looks now, there is no stopping the mighty German army. This is an extremely dangerous situation and we could only hope that the soldiers on both sides know where we are and they know that we are reporters. There are no other reporters nearby as this situation is too dangerous to be in. We will be moving back to a safer distance soon, where the other reporters are.

(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)

It was by chance that we were caught in the fighting and decided to report to you while we make our way to safer grounds.

A nearby EXPLOSION.

ANNA (CONT'D)

That was close.  
(to Duke)  
Are you okay?

Another nearby EXPLOSION and Duke is thrown into the air.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Duke! Where are you?

German soldiers walk past her as they continue firing at the French and Belgian troops.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I'm a reporter. Don't fire. I'm a reporter.

They ignore her as the last soldier walk past her. She frantically searches for her cameraman.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Duke, say something? Are you all right? Where are you?

She hears a GROAN. It is a badly injured soldier. She rushes to him.

ANNA (CONT'D)

How can I help you?

A GERMAN MEDIC approaches with other military medical technicians.

GERMAN MEDIC

It's okay, Ma'am. We got it.

ANNA

I'm a reporter.

GERMAN MEDIC

It's okay. We got it.

Two medical technicians put the injured soldier on a stretcher and carry him away.

ANNA

Have you seen my cameraman?

GERMAN MEDIC

No. I haven't.

He walks away. She continues frantically searching for her cameraman. She sees him lying on his back on a pile of branches and leaves under the shade of the dense forest. She runs to him and kneels down beside him.

ANNA

Oh my God, there you are. Are you all right?

DUKE

I don't know.

He tries to move, but stops as he feels great pain.

DUKE (CONT'D)

I don't think so.

ANNA

Where does it hurt?

DUKE

Where doesn't it hurt?

FIGHTING and EXPLOSIONS continue in the distant as the battle moves leftward.

ANNA

Thank God you're alive. We are not doing this again. For now on we're reporting only from a safe distance, like all the other reporters.

DUKE

It wasn't by choice. If you remember, we got lost.

ANNA

Well, we're not doing that anymore. What can I do?

DUKE

Something to deaden this intense pain.

She searches though a pouch with a red cross on it.

ANNA

I don't know what I'm looking for.

Duke, still lying on his back, takes the pouch and searches through it. He takes out a long tube wrapped in plastic and gives it to her. He drops the pouch to the side.

DUKE

This stuff is good.

ANNA

What do I do with it?

DUKE

Read the instructions.

She quickly reads the side of the tube, unwraps it and then inserts the tube in his mouth. Duke breathes through the tube.

ANNA

What do I do next?

DUKE

Check for bleeding.

She quickly searches his arms and legs. He SCREAMS in pain. He spits out the tube.

ANNA

Sorry.

She continues checking his body.

ANNA (CONT'D)

There's no blood.

She picks up the tube from the ground and brushes off the dirt.

ANNA (CONT'D)

It got dirty.

DUKE

That's okay. I don't need it anymore. It did the trick.

ANNA

What did it do?

DUKE

It numbed me. And I'm getting sleepy.



ANNA

Don't fall asleep. What do I do next?

DUKE

Help me off with my helmet.

She removes his helmet.

DUKE (CONT'D)

Take off yours too.

She removes her helmet. Her hair falls on her face. He raises his hand and moves her hair to the side. He smiles.

DUKE (CONT'D)

Hey, kiss me before I die.

ANNA

Don't say that.

DUKE

Don't say what? Don't say kiss me?  
Or don't say die?

ANNA

Neither... both. I don't know.

DUKE

I'm not your type?

ANNA

That thing is affecting your mind.  
Come on, what do I do next?

DUKE

I might be dying. Would you deny a  
dying my his last wish. Come on,  
just a little kiss.

ANNA

No.

She looks at him in the eyes. She looks scared and confused. He closes his eyes. She holds one of his hands and gives him a kiss on the lips. He smiles.

DUKE

Thank you. Now put on your helmet  
and go get help.

ANNA

Don't die.

She lets go of his hand, grabs her helmet and runs off.

DISSOLVE TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS - ANNA AND DUKE REPORTING THE WAR - ANNA  
V.O. DURING THE SHOTS.

- A) Anna and Duke reporting from a high ridge with heavy fighting below. Duke is operating the camera wearing bandages and a leg cast.
- B) A different battle with heavy fighting consisting of ground plasma cannons and hand-to-hand combat.
- C) A different battle report with Duke wearing a leg cast but no bandages.
- D) German soldiers making a charge into enemy trenches with death and destruction.
- E) Anna and Duke reporting from a high ridge with heavy fighting below. Duke is operating the camera while walking with a limp. He has no bandages or leg cast.

ANNA

(v.o.)

And so what started out as a small war that was supposed to end quickly is now in its fourth month. It has now become an all-out effort to stop Germany from taking over Europe and maybe even the rest of the world. While fighting Russia on the East and France and Britain on the West, Germany appears to be an unstoppable force with seemingly unlimited resources. There is talk that other nations, and maybe even the Americans, might join the war to help stop Germany. But so far every battle outcome has been going Germany's way. Hundreds of thousands of lives have been lost so far with many of more to surely come as there does not appear to be a quick end in sight. But right now on this Christmas evening all is quiet on the Western Front.

EXT. YPRES, BELGIUM - BATTLEFIELD - NIGHT

PAN the Western front line as the Germans and the British face each other while staying in their make-shift barriers and trenches. There is no fighting but both sides are on guard, watching each other on high alert. Snow begins to fall lightly. A British soldier wearing a bright red Santa's cap boldly writes MERRY CHRISTMAS! on a white kick ball. He tosses it to a near by soldier who KICKS it high into the air toward the German front line. They wait.

The ball is returned through the air and is caught by a British soldier.

CHRISTMAS BRITISH SOLDIER  
(shouts to the Germans)  
Merry Christmas!

Another British soldier starts singing "SILENT NIGHT." Other soldiers join in the SINGING, repeating the first verse of the song until it becomes very LOUD. The soldiers wave their arms at each other to stop singing. In the silence they hear that the Germans have also joined in on the SINGING. The British soldiers resume their SINGING. The soldiers on both sides are SINGING.

The soldier with the ball tosses it into the center area between the two sides.

CHRISTMAS GERMAN SOLDIER  
(shouts to the British)  
A truce until the end of Christmas!

Soldiers on both sides SPREAD the message to each other.

A British soldier kicks the ball back to the German soldier. Others join in and it becomes a soccer game.

Other soldiers enter the center area, beside the soccer game, and shake hands, converse, exchange drinks and snacks. Some show photos of their girl friends and family to the other soldiers.

A German Commander blows a LOUD WHISTLE.

CHRISTMAS GERMAN COMMANDER  
(shouting)  
Attention all. It is midnight.  
The Christmas truce is officially  
ended.

Soldiers from both sides leave the center area and return to their posts in their respective trenches.

EXT. YPRES, BELGIUM - BATTLEFIELD - DAY

There are no soldiers in the trenches. Some lingering brush fires and smoke remain from a recent battle. A few military workers and civilians are in the background cleaning up the area and recovering bodies and clearing out objects and equipment.

Anna is doing a live report. Duke follows her while holding the main camera and walking with a slight limp.

ANNA

This is Anna Johanson your friendly war correspondent. I am reporting to you from Ypres, Belgium, the site of the Christmas miracle.

She picks up the white kick ball with MERRY CHRISTMAS! boldly written on it.

ANNA (CONT'D)

For a few brief moments here on Christmas night all fighting stopped and soldiers from both sides played a game of soccer until midnight when Christmas ran out. The score was Germany three, Britain two.

She puts down the ball.

ANNA (CONT'D)

A few hours later fighting resumed and Germany proceeded to move onward and into France. In this section of the front line it was the British armies which were supposed to hold the Germans back. But it appears that they were greatly outnumbered. We're safe here as the fighting has moved miles ahead of us into France.

She positions herself at the edge of one of the trenches.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Fighting on the Western front is one of trench warfare. Both sides would dig deep trenches about seven feet deep, six feet wide just behind their front line and remain there until one side makes the move to attack the other side.

She makes her way slowly and carefully down the trench.

ANNA (CONT'D)

So far, Germany has been victorious  
in just about all of their battles  
as they continue into France.

She is inside the trench and stands still, looking around.

ANNA (CONT'D)

This trench is broken as I could  
only see a few yards in either  
direction before my view is blocked  
by the collapsed walls.

She examines the walls around her.

ANNA (CONT'D)

They say that being stuck in a  
trench in battle is the worst way  
to die. I'm not claustrophobic but  
I am starting to feel a bit  
anxious. I could sense the feeling  
of fear starting to set in. And  
there's not even any fighting going  
on around me. In battle times the  
soldiers in the trenches would be  
surrounded by shelling and plasma  
bursts. It would be damp and they  
would be soaked and just waiting.  
It's a form of torture. Waiting  
for hours or maybe even days.  
Waiting with no sense of an end.  
Waiting to be attacked or to be  
given the orders to attack. You're  
waiting for death. It's cold, wet,  
rat-infested and lice-ridden.

She walks in place and feels the ground beneath her feet.

ANNA (CONT'D)

The ground is very muddy and  
uneven. It's like I'm stepping on  
rocks and bandages in the soggy  
ground beneath me. What's this?

She reaches down and pulls up something from the floor of the  
trench. It is a Christmas ornament. She holds it up to the  
main camera.

ANNA (CONT'D)

It's a Christmas ornament.  
Something left behind from the  
Christmas miracle.

She reaches down and begins pulling up a tangled piece of cloth. It appears to be a muddy, ripped uniform. There is partial arm in the sleeve with a dangling hand sticking out. She SCREAMS.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Oh my God!

She tosses it back and unsuccessfully tries to climb out of the hole.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Get me out of here!

DUKE

Go ahead and sign off.

ANNA

(panicky)

Duke, put the camera down and get me out of here. Get me out of here now!

Duke puts down the camera.

DUKE

(frustrated)

Here I come.

EXT. YPRES, BELGIUM - OUTSIDE A MAKESHIFT TENT - DAY

Anna waits outside the tent. Duke comes out from the tent.

DUKE

Go ahead. He's waiting for you.

ANNA

What's he want?

DUKE

He wants to talk to you.

She steps into the tent.

INT. YPRES, BELGIUM - OUTSIDE A MAKESHIFT TENT - DAY

Anna enters the tent and sees Curtis on the computer display screen.

ANNA

Hello, Curtis.

CURTIS

What happened, Anna?

ANNA

What do you mean? You mean the hand? I can't help it if a hand happened to be with some rags I pulled up.

CURTIS

It's not the hand. It's the way you reacted to the hand. You terrified millions of people. Instead of calming them down you scared them. You took something as endearing as the Christmas miracle and then you shocked everyone by reacting to the severed hand in the worst way. Everyone knows war is terrifying. They want to know what's happening, but they want it to be presented to them in a responsible way. And you've been doing that up until these last few reports. And especially this last fiasco. You're supposed to be the FRIENDLY war correspondent. Be friendly.

ANNA

Okay, I will. I'll remember that.

CURTIS

Come on, you're a big star now. More people are watching your reports than anyone else's. And it's because the people are becoming scared when they watch the other reporters. So, you need to keep your fans. Don't scare them off.

ANNA

Okay, Curtis. Thank you.

CURTIS

Good bye, Anna.

ANNA

Bye.

She hits a button on the display and ends communication. The screen goes dark. As she is about to turn away a message from username BULLSEYE appears on the screen.

It reads THE BRITISH WILL MINE HILL 60 IN APRIL. She looks at it for a while and tries to understand the meaning.

EXT. YPRES, BELGIUM - OUTSIDE A MAKESHIFT TENT - DAY

Anna walks out from the tent.

DUKE  
How did it go?

ANNA  
I don't know. He told me not to scare away our fans.

DUKE  
I agree.

ANNA  
So, who's Bullseye?

DUKE  
What do you mean?

ANNA  
Who's Bullseye? He left a message for you on the screen.

DUKE  
What did it say?

ANNA  
It said the British are going to mine Hill Sixty in April. Is Bullseye your source?

DUKE  
What else did it say?

ANNA  
That's all. Just British, Hill Sixty, in April. It's still on the screen if you wanna see it.

He goes into the tent. She waits outside. He comes back outside. He does not look her in the eyes.

DUKE  
That was embarrassing.

ANNA  
Your source is someone in the British military?



DUKE

A good reporter never reveals his source.

He starts walking away. His limp is slight. She follows him.

ANNA

So, Hill Sixty in April is our next story?

DUKE

It would appear so. Let's see what happens.

ANNA

What do we do until then?

DUKE

You could do whatever you like, unless we run across something before that.

ANNA

Can I just stick with you?

Duke stops, looks at her and smiles.

DUKE

I would like that.

EXT. BELGIUM - HILL 60 - DAY

Anna and Duke are sitting on the grassy ground of a hill top looking down at the soldiers in the trenches at the front line beneath them. Duke nudges Anna.

DUKE

Get up. It's time.

She stands up with microphone in hand, adjusts her hair.

ANNA

It's time? How do you know?

DUKE

Look over there.

She sees two British officers setting up a tripod on a nearby hill top.

DUKE (CONT'D)

This is going to be so big that the British army has to record it. But they can't start setting up until the very last moment so as to not tip off the Germans about something about to happen.

ANNA

So this is it?

DUKE

This is it.

Duke stands up and aims the main camera at Anna.

DUKE (CONT'D)

Go ahead. Don't forget your lines. And try not to flinch.

ANNA

Okay, here goes.

She takes in a deep breath and smiles.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Hello. This is Anna Johanson, your friendly war correspondent. I am here at Hill Sixty in Belgium where the front line is at a stalemate below me, and neither side is making any headway. From what we can see there is no action above ground. But from what we hear there is a lot of action below ground. Word has it that there is a lot of digging by both sides to bore deep mines beneath the other side's trenches and to somehow gain an advantage over the other side. Anything could happen as one side gains the advantage over the other side and makes the first move. All we can do now is just watch and wait.

After several seconds a huge EXPLOSION is detonated underground deep within the German's side of the front line. Anna stands still looking at the camera and does not flinch. Duke puts up his hand to her with his fingers in an OK sign. The explosion is a loud ROAR with rock and dirt rising up in a mountainous wall several stories high. The wall collapses and falls back to the ground.

The British army charges into the German trenches with men and weapons. The Germans retreat away from the front line.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Britain has made the first move and has detonated a very powerful explosive device, or devices in Germany's front line. The Germans are retreating, leaving behind their supplies and weapons. This may be a turning point for the British as this is the first time mines were used beneath the trenches, and the British, in this battle, ended up as the victors. Yes, this decisive win definitely goes to Britain. This is Anna Johanson, your friendly war correspondent. And you saw it here first.

She stands still, looking into the camera. Duke runs to her in joy and picks her up and spins.

DUKE

You did it, babe. That was awesome!

ANNA

(laughing)  
Your timing was perfect.

DUKE

That was our best report so far. Everything went perfectly!

There is a sound of BEEPING from the pile of gear. Duke runs to it and unpacks the display screen. He looks at it.

ANNA

Is it Bullseye?

DUKE

Yes. It's Bullseye. We need to get ourselves some gas masks.

EXT. BELGIUM - YPRES

Hundreds of reporters and news crews are crowded atop the hillside overlooking the battle frontline below.

ANNA

A lot of reporters here.

DUKE  
They know where the good story is.

ANNA  
They know to follow you, especially  
after that last story we did.

DUKE  
Let's go down to where the action  
is.

He starts walking down toward the front line. Anna follows  
beside him. The large group of reporters follow behind.

ANNA  
Are you sure that's a good idea?  
It might not be safe down there.

DUKE  
Relax. We got our gas masks.

ANNA  
You know, I've been thinking, I  
don't think we should use them.  
How do we explain that we have  
them?

DUKE  
They're perfectly legal to have.

ANNA  
No, I mean how were we supposed to  
know to bring them? Do you see  
what I mean?

DUKE  
We don't have to say a thing.

ANNA  
Let's not let anyone see we have  
them.

Duke pulls out the main camera and aims it at her.

DUKE  
You're on.

Anna grabs the microphone and looks into the camera.

ANNA  
Hello. This is Anna Johanson your  
friendly war correspondent.  
(MORE)

## ANNA (CONT'D)

I am standing here at the front lines in the northern part of Belgium in Ypres. The British along with France and Belgium are holding the line against Germany's advancement toward France. Right now there is no fighting. But tensions are rising. Fighting could break out at any moment now.

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(Continue with the rest of the movie about World War I in space)

FADE OUT.