

F O R Y O U R C O N S I D E R A T I O N 2 0 1 1

The
IRON LADY

BEST SCREENPLAY

Abi Morgan



THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY

THE IRON LADY

by

Abi Morgan

Author's Note:

References to "PRESENT" mean the undifferentiated years of the recent past (not 2011).

INT. SHOP. NR CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT. DAWN.

The HUM of a large refrigerator just audible over the sound of Indian music -

MARGARET, briefly glimpsed pondering cartons of milk.

The electronic PEEP of the cash til.

A man on a mobile phone pushes past MARGARET, who takes her place second in the queue.

The female shopkeeper piles newspapers on the counter in front of MARGARET. Distracted by images of the bombed hotel on the TV, she hesitates for beat.

MAN BEHIND THE COUNTER

One forty-nine please.

MARGARET

How much is the milk?

MAN BEHIND THE COUNTER

Forty-nine pence.

(taking the change)

Thank you.

MARGARET turns to leave, jostled by a tall young man wired into an ipod.

EXT. STREET. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT. DAWN.

MARGARET heads down the busy street, shopping bag in hand.

INT. KITCHEN. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT. DAY.

MARGARET sits at breakfast with her husband DENIS, sipping tea. DENIS butters his toast. MARGARET shakes her head.

MARGARET

Too much. Much too much butter.

DENIS

I like butter.

MARGARET

Milk's gone up.

MARGARET reaches for a jug, pouring milk into it, sliding it down on a table.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

49p a pint.

DENIS

Good grief! We'll have to economise. I suppose we could always sell the car.

(chuckles)

Or take in paying guests!

He scoops up the newspaper and glances towards the door -

DENIS (CONT'D)

Watch out. She's on the prowl.

MARGARET looks beyond DENIS to a a sense of growing commotion. A concerned POLICE GUARD coming up the stairs meeting JUNE [early 60's] MARGARET's carer, along a distant corridor, steady on the approach.

MARGARET

(to DENIS)

Eat your egg.

JUNE smiles with visible relief on seeing MARGARET, now sitting tapping open her egg.

JUNE

Goodness! There you are.

JUNE's look of quiet concern.

MARGARET

Yes.

MARGARET eats her egg.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Here we are.

But for JUNE, she is entirely alone.

INT. CORRIDOR CHESTER SQUARE. PRESENT. DAY.

WHISPERING-

JUNE

I don't understand how it happened, how could she possibly have got out? It's very very important -

MARGARET looks out of the kitchen. Her POV down the corridor of JUNE and the POLICEMAN and a CLEANER.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Please just make it really clear.
Who's on after you?

POLICE GUARD
Dixon.

MARGARET slips away.

INT. HALL. CHESTER SQUARE. DAY.

MARGARET hurries through the hall.

INT. BEDROOM. HOUSE. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT. DAY.

A wide cupboard-

MARGARET's eyes move back along the rail in front of her, her fingers touch hanger after hanger of brown tweed and grey twill.

JUNE goes over to the curtains, pulling them back, letting in the sunlight-

JUNE
Beautiful day. Oh, you've made a start. Carol's coming soon, I'll get some bags. Anything you want to go to Mark, I'll bring up a suitcase for it.

The smell of smoke lingering. Suddenly DENIS' hand reaches across, wavering between jackets of brown tweed and grey twill-

He reaches for a suit.

MARGARET
No no no no. The grey.

DENIS (O.S)
You sure?

The swipe of a clothes brush, briefly seen, drawn across one sleeve-

MARGARET
Yes.

Distant footsteps-

MARGARET (CONT'D)
...Definitely the grey.

JUNE returns, oblivious-

DENIS (O.S)
 Righty ho. Boss knows best.

JUNE spies the newspaper, sees the photos of twisted carnage on the front page.

DENIS (CONT'D)
 Don't let her take my paper away.

JUNE reaches one hand out to scoop it up in passing-

MARGARET
 Oh, I haven't had a chance to look at that yet, dear.

JUNE
 Sorry.

JUNE hesitates, leaves the newspaper resting on the bed as she heads off with the suit on a hanger.

DENIS
 Atta-girl.

DENIS smiles as he stands in the bathroom doorway, soaping his face with shaving cream-

He hums to himself as he resumes shaving until-

DENIS (O.S) (CONT'D)
 Damn.

MARGARET looks up, DENIS has nicked his chin-

MARGARET
 Blot it...Blot it..

She turns, sees JUNE, through the ajar door, standing in the corridor, looking back at her

JUNE
 Sorry ?

INT. DRAWING ROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT. DAY.

A comfortable drawing room, filled with the photographs and memorabilia of a former political life.

MARGARET stands by the window, half a dozen of DENIS' ties in her hand. Pulling back the net curtain, MARGARET peers out-

Two POLICEMAN stand down below next to a Police BMW car. They are lost in conversation, pointing to the door, clearly concerned.

One POLICE MAN nods to the other, a sense of the changing of the guard as he drives off in the BMW.

SUDDENLY from behind-

DENIS

Now look what you've done. Are they to keep the loonies out or you in?

MARGARET eyes DENIS, looking at her with wry smile -

DENIS (CONT'D)

I'll be off then.

MARGARET

Wear your scarf. There's a chill out there.

Suddenly looming over her and grinning down as if at the top of a tunnel SUSIE, MARGARET's personal secretary carrying a cardboard box.

SUSIE

Good morning Lady Thatcher. Are you alright ?

(concerned)

How are you feeling ?

MARGARET

I'm fine, thank you Susie.

SUSIE

I've just been reading about the bombings.

MARGARET

Yes. Frightful.

SUSIE's mobile goes off. She fumbles in her bag to switch it off.

SUSIE

Sorry.

SUSIE (CONT'D)

These are the books for you to sign. I brought as many as I could find. Shall we go through your appointments?

MARGARET looks at her still nonplussed.

SUSIE (CONT'D)

We said we'd go through them today.

MARGARET nods-

MARGARET

Yes, of course, dear. Today.

SUSIE

The invitation has come from Downing Street for the unveiling of your portrait. I'll put it on the mantelpiece, and there's an invitation from Lord Armstrong for lunch on the first Friday of next month.

The murmur of SUSIE's voice, a kind of white noise-

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

I said no because you've got a concert that afternoon but if you'd like to..?

SILENCE-

SUSIE(O.S) (CONT'D)

....It looks like a very interesting programme.

MARGARET's listens, oddly distracted-

MARGARET

What are they playing?

SUSIE looks at her momentarily at a loss then scrabbles back through the diary-

SUSIE

I think they said Rogers and Hammerstein.

'SHALL WE DANCE' FROM 'THE KING & I' SUDDENLY BREAKING THROUGH AS IF FROM ANOTHER TIME CARRYING INTO....

INT. SADLER'S WELLS. LONDON. 1950. NIGHT.

An orchestra in full flight-

A programme for THE KING & I on a woman's lap. A man's hand reaches in and her hands slips into his.

INT. DRAWING ROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT. DAY.

Whilst SUSIE shuffles through the arrangements at the desk in the background, MARGARET stands at the window.

MARGARET

Silly man.

MARGARET's gaze, seeing DENIS just visible in the street below. He looks up, smiles,

MARGARET (CONT'D)

He hasn't got his scarf on.

MARGARET throws DENIS a half wave. In return, he twirls his umbrella and does a couple of steps of a Chaplin walk for her benefit before passing the Postman who is shuffling through his letters as he approaches the front step, below.

SUSIE looks on with quiet concern.

INT. DRAWING ROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT. DAY.

MARGARET' is at her desk signing a stack of her memoirs, *The Downing Street Years*.

MARGARET opens one, reaching for a pen. The curve of inky handwriting as she begins to sign them, *Margaret Thatcher*.

Close on the swoop of the pen. Without missing a beat, she writes the name *Margaret Roberts*...

The insistent blare of an air raid siren from another time cuts through -

INT. BACK PARLOUR. SHOP. GRANTHAM. 1943. DUSK.

The rumble of an approaching air raid overhead-

The STEADY SHAKE of the table legs all around pulls out to reveal-

BEATRICE ROBERTS [early 50's] austere, crouched next to MARGARET under a wide kitchen table along with ALFRED ROBERTS [early/mid 50's] a cumbersome man and MURIEL ROBERTS [21 yrs]. The sound of an air-raid siren.

ALFRED

Did someone cover the butter?

All look at one another in a panic.

MARGARET

I'll go.

Suddenly MARGARET scabbles out from under the table, all look on with horror-

BEATRICE
 Leave it.

ALFRED (CALLING AFTER)
 Margaret-

INT. SHOP. GRANTHAM. 1943. DUSK.

MARGARET scooping up the butter cover slamming it quickly over the thin slice of butter left in the butter dish before sliding it into the cold cupboard underneath the counter.

SUDDENLY the shop illuminates- A DISTANT EXPLOSION.

MARGARET momentarily paralyzed before, running back towards the back parlour to resume her place under the table.

INT. BACK PARLOUR. SHOP. GRANTHAM. 1943. DUSK.

MARGARET scrabbles underneath.

ALFRED surreptitiously pats her arm.

ALFRED (CONT'D)
 Good girl.

She shrugs, flushing with pride.

ALFRED (CONT'D)
 Tomorrow, no matter what they do,
 it'll be business as usual.

The DRONE of the air raid dissolving away-

INT. SHOP, GRANTHAM. 1945. DAY.

A boy and girl look on as MARGARET measures flour on the shop scales.

CUSTOMER (O.S.)
 Two of the small beef, Mr.
 Roberts.

MARGARET glances up at her father serving further down the counter.

ALFRED (O.S.)
 What is the life blood of any
 community? It's business....

INT. HALL. GRANTHAM. 1943. DAY

ALFRED on a small town hall stage behind a makeshift podium.

ALFRED
Not just big business but small
businesses, like mine.

The SOFT press of MEN all around, MARGARET, a lone woman amongst them, peering over shoulders.

BEATRICE
(passing/hushed
aside)
Margaret!

BEATRICE tuts, shoving a tray in her hand.

BEATRICE (CONT'D)
CUPS!

MARGARET sinks a little, taking the tray, and glances back at ALFRED just visible on a stage.

ALFRED
We on this island are strong.
We're self-reliant. Sometimes
we're plain bloody minded.

NOW AT THE BACK OF THE HALL, holding a tray loaded with dirty cups, MARGARET watches her father, back turned to the kitchen filled with WOMEN and YOUNG GIRLS making tea and washing up cups.

ALFRED (CONT'D)
But we also believe in helping
each other. And I don't mean by
state hand-outs...

EXT. STREET. GRANTHAM. 1943. DAY.

MARGARET sweeps outside the shop, glancing across the street at-

THREE PRETTY GIRLS dolled up for the evening and arms linked, crossing on the other side of the pavement.

PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN 1
Margaret, do you want to come to
the pictures?

MARGARET's eyes catch on the glitter of a brooch in passing. They turn to look at her WHISPERING and GIGGLING.

PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN 2
 She can't come, she's got to
 study.

The FLUSH of MARGARET'S skin -

PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN 2 (CONT'D)
 Miss Hoity Toity!

The STING OF EMBARRASSMENT.

THE SENSE OF THE PRETTY GIRLS WHISPERING ABOUT HER, EYES
 TRAVELLING OVER her disparagingly.

ALFRED (V.O.)
 Never run with the crowd,
 Margaret. Go your own way.

The SWAY of a SKIRT as they walk away.

ALFRED OOV
 (close to)
 Open it then.

INT. SHOP. GRANTHAM. 1943. DAY.

Close on a telegram addressed to MARGARET ROBERTS, 1-3
 North Parade, Grantham.

MARGARET'S father ALFRED, watching.

MARGARET
 (looking up)
 I've got a place at Oxford.

ALFRED bear-hugs MARGARET awkwardly.

INT. DRAWING ROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT. DAY.

MARGARET at her desk, the ghost of a smile.

INT. SHOP. GRANTHAM. 1943. DAY

ALFRED
 Don't let me down Margaret.

The CHINK of a teacup-

MARGARET looks down the corridor in expectation at
 BEATRICE standing at the sink working the SQUEAK of the
 cloth against a stubborn tea stain.

MARGARET
 (calling out)
 Mother?

BEATRICE comes down the corridor into the shop, wiping her hands on a cloth. ALFRED goes to hand BEATRICE the letter.

BEATRICE
 (shakes head)
 My hands are still damp.

BEATRICE turns and walks back to where she came from.

MARGARET looks back at the letter, heart bursting, trying to contain her joy.

INT. DRAWING ROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT. DAY.

MARGARET looks down, pen in hand, the words *Margaret Roberts* newly signed in the front cover.

She tears the page out.

INT. BEDROOM. HOUSE. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT. DAY.

MARGARET napping in bed.

The still of the bedroom, caught in the half light of a late afternoon-

A hand slides a teacup onto the bedside table -

The flicker of MARGARET's eyelids-

QUICKFLASH -

BEATRICE
 (passing/hushed
 aside)
 Margaret!

BEATRICE tuts, shoving a tray in her hand.

BEATRICE (CONT'D)
 CUPS!

PRESENT -

MARGARET stirs again, blinking awake.

DENIS sits by the window. He is bent over a pair of spectacles, wrapping wire around one of the arms with a pair of pliers. Other items of clothing of his are on Margaret's couch.

DENIS
 (without taking his
 eyes of the job)
 They're talking about you again.

The murmur of JUNE on the phone-

MARGARET
 What time is it?

DENIS
 Sun's not quite over the yard arm.
 Time for tea.

A phone rings, O.S.

MARGARET considers DENIS now wearing a pink turban and
 confronts the extraordinary head-gear.

MARGARET
 What have you got on your head?

DENIS smiles, throwing back his head, the swathe of pink
 fabric from his turban hanging down ridiculously-

DENIS
 Found it in the cupboard and
 thought bugger it, it's Friday,
 why not fancy dress?

MARGARET sits drinking her tea, JUNE's hushed tones
 almost audible.

MARGARET
 You look ridiculous.

MARGARET strains to hear-

DENIS
 Bosslady no like?

She makes a shushing motion.

MARGARET
 (as if to a bad dog)
 No, Denis, Bosslady no like.

MARGARET resumes listening. The door ajar, the sounds of
 life just audible outside-

JUNE (O.S)
 It's taken Carol so long to get
 her to agree to this. She's been
 so reluctant to let his things go.

DENIS sinks onto the bed, bored.

MARGARET
 (without looking)
 Feet.

He tuts and adjusts his legs so that his shoes don't dirty the bedspread.

MARGARET stands, ear pressed close to the open door-

JUNE (O.S)
 You can never be sure she's taking
 her medication...I think sometimes
 she hides them..

DENIS VO
 Oh, rumbled!

MARGARET looks back at her cup of tea, spots two pills resting in the tea cup.

She considers the pills, pops them in her mouth, drinks.

JUNE (O.S)
 She's definitely more distracted
 than usual today.

INT/EXT. BEDROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. PRESENT. DAY.

A shout in the street. A woman's voice.

CAROL OOV
 Can I suggest you remove the
 sticker from the back of your car.

Margaret looks through the net curtains and sees CAROL THATCHER[early 50's] just visible stepping out of a taxi, remonstrating with the driver, clutching her purse and waving her credit card at him with rising irritation.

CAROL OOV (CONT'D)
 Well then take the sticker off! I
 call that false advertising! I
 would say keep the change, but
 there isn't any change.

INT. DRAWING ROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT. DAY.

A scotch being poured. The cap not quite going back on the whisky bottle. A frantic fumble for the remotes for the tv.

CAROL OOV
 Hello June, any news? I've brought
 every bag I could find.

High shot of MARGARET sitting in a chair watching TV. As if she has been there a while.

CAROL enters with suit carriers in her arms.

CAROL

Hello Ma. Bloody taxi driver.
Wouldn't take my card. I said
don't have a sticker saying you
take Visa and then insist on cash.
Can you believe it? I was
rummaging around the bottom of my
bag. He didn't get a tip.

MARGARET

I didn't know that you were
dropping by today, dear.

CAROL

(Dumping her stuff all over the
place)
Yes, you said yesterday...You
wanted to make a start on Dad's
things. The cupboards ? Then I can
help you dress.

MARGARET, nonplussed.

CAROL (CONT'D)

You've got Michael and-

MARGARET

Jaqueline...

CAROL

Coming for dinner tonight.

MARGARET

Of course.
(turning up the TV)
We're having halibut.

On TV, images of a bombed street,

CAROL

Oh God. Isn't it terrible?

MARGARET nods, both silently listening to the drone of
the newscaster-

CAROL (CONT'D)

They think it's Al Quaida -

The charred remains of cars, desperate people running, a
rescue operation midway-

MARGARET blinks, inwardly reeling from the images-

MARGARET (V.O)

Denis!

Quick Flash: Denis in pyjamas, brushing his teeth in a hotel bathroom, glances at her through the open door.

DENIS

It'll be fine. Come on, get your head down, it's ten to three, for God's sake.

EXT. GRAND HOTEL. BRIGHTON. 1984. NIGHT.

Chaos outside the Grand Hotel in the aftermath of the bomb.

The injured are pulled through the rubble.

NEWS READER (V.O.)

At ten to three this morning an explosion extensively damaged the Grand Hotel in Brighton, scene of the Conservative Party conference.

NEWS READER 2 (V.O.)

...Where the Prime Minister and a number of her cabinet were staying. They escaped unhurt -

The WHIR of SIRENS-

The BLUR of FIRE ENGINE LIGHTS-

The image of a BODY being stretchered out of the rubble by FIREFIGHTERS.

NEWS READER 3 (V.O.)

Five people have died, many others are injured, some critically. The IRA have claimed responsibility.

DENIS and MARGARET sit in their coats covering MARGARET's evening dress and DENIS pyjamas. Both looking out in silent shock at the devastated Grand hotel, reflected on the glass of the car windows.

MARGARET looks on with quiet, sobering despair, still numb with shock. DENIS looks at her. He grips her hand. They sit, fingers locked.

INT. DRAWING ROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT. DAY.

Close on MARGARET's hand and whisky glass. Shaking.

MARGARET
 (standing up)
 We must release a statement,
 offering our condolences.

CAROL
 I'm sure they've already-

MARGARET
 We must never, ever, ever give in
 to terrorists.

MARGARET sees JUNE and CAROL exchange looks of 'oh dear...'

INT.BEDROOM. HOUSE. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT.DUSK.

MARGARET sits in a dressing gown at a dressing table, staring at her reflection. CAROL stands behind her, holding up several dresses.

CAROL
 Now ma, are we going long or just
 below the knee tonight?

MARGARET
 Oh, below the knee I should think.

She watches, irritated, as CAROL reaches to move a pile of DENIS' clothes-

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 No! Don't move those. I haven't
 finished sorting them.

CAROL settles beside her on a chair.

CAROL
 I hear you went out today...You
 mustn't go out on your own Mummy.
 We've talked about that.

MARGARET
 There was no milk.

CAROL
 Call Robert he'll get it for you
 if June's not up-

MARGARET
 I am not for the knackers yet.

From behind-

DENIS (O.S)
 Now take it easy, Margaret.

DENIS just visible, perched on the bed, looks up from doing the crossword in the newspaper-

CAROL

No one is saying that.

MARGARET

If I can't go out to buy a pint of milk then what is the world coming to. Really Carol, please don't fuss about it. You've always been like this, fuss fuss fuss. You must find something better to do with your time. It's most unattractive in a woman. When I was your age the last thing I wanted to do was fuss around my mother.

Silence-

CAROL, inwardly stung quietly busying herself, forcing all emotion away.

MARGARET hesitates catching DENIS' eye, with quiet warning.

DENIS

Four down, 9 letters.

DENIS withdraws into his crossword.

DENIS (CONT'D)

Something b something t something
n...something something
somthing...*Refusal to change*
course-

MARGARET

Obstinate.

DENIS writes, pleased.

CAROL looks up, with quiet bemusement-

CAROL

What?

MARGARET deflects, pointing to a necklace in CAROL's hands.

MARGARET

Pearls. I'll wear the pearls.

CAROL slips them onto MARGARET'S neck and fastens them.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

There they are. My little twins.
Thank you, dear.

INT. CORRIDOR. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT. EVENING.

The murmur of conversation-

CAROL tails MARGARET, steady on the approach towards the drawing room.

CAROL

It's nearly all familiar faces,
William, Michael and his lovely
wife-

MARGARET

Jacqueline.

CAROL smiles, clearly reassured-

CAROL

And then there's Peter, James R
and James T and that very nice man-

DISTANT LAUGHTER

MARGARET

Yes-

CAROL

- we met last year.

MARGARET

Yes I remember-

CAROL

I think he's bringing his new lady
friend just to mix it up a bit.
We're rather short on women - but
I'm sure we'll manage-

MARGARET

I've always preferred the company
of men-

CAROL gestures ahead, MARGARET nods, reticent, yet forcing herself on, she hesitates at the door, her hand trembling on the handle.

CAROL

Ma?

INT. CORRIDOR.DARTFORD. 1949. EVENING.

Close up of a shoe being rubbed on a calf. A young hand hesitating on a door handle.

INT. SITTING ROOM. HOUSE. DARTFORD. 1949. EVENING.

A 1950's drinks party-

A bank of stuffy GREY SUITED MEN pontificating and their WIVES lost in a separate polite conversation-

GREY SUITED MAN

Ah, Miss Roberts. Hoping to be chosen as our candidate for parliament.

A young MARGARET [24yrs] stylish in a suit, straight from work, stands clutching her handbag, oddly out of place amidst the neat 50's chintz. A bank of sporting prints collage a wall. A bespectacled YOUNG DENIS THATCHER (30's) glances up from his drink, taking her in.

INT.DINING ROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT.EVENING.

The MURMUR of dinner party conversation-

MARGARET

Well I don't like coalitions, never have...

MARGARET's POV of her fingers absently grazing a confusing array of cutlery laid out in place setting in front of her.

Her confused face.

DENIS VO

Start on the outside...

INT. DINING ROOM. HOUSE. DARTFORD. 1949. EVENING.

DENIS whispers.

DENIS VO

...and work your way in.

A long table packed with silverware. She looks back at her ornate and rather hideous starter, a tiny wobbling savoury confection in aspic.

PORTLY HOST

...Attlee has his sights set on the steel industry, you mark my words.

GREY SUITED MAN

They'll be nationalizing the bloody air next.

MALE GUEST

Yes, hold your breath, sir, that's government property!

PORTLY HOST

So was your father a political man, too, Miss Roberts?

MARGARET

Oh, yes, to his core. And Mayor of Grantham.

PORTLY HOST

And a grocer as well!

MARGARET

Yes.

Ears prick up around the table. The Host is lost for something to say.

HOSTESS

And did you help, err, in the...shop?

MARGARET

Oh, yes. It was a family business.

GREY SUITED MAN

A very good starting point for the political life, I'm sure.

MARGARET

That and a degree from Oxford.

The put-down, though not intentional, causes Denis to smile.

MARGARET catches the smile. She remains unruffled and goes back to her food, picking up a knife and fork, working her way in, teasing her hors d'oeuvres.

INT. DINING ROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT. EVENING.

MARGARET sits oddly removed, hand instinctively covering her wine glass, as a WINE WAITER hovers.

MARGARET
 (hushed aside to
 WAITER)
 Whisky.

The MURMUR of conversation all around-

INT. DINING ROOM. HOUSE. DARTFORD. 1949. EVENING.

Pudding is on the go and Margaret is warming to her theme.

MARGARET
 What I do think is that a man
 should be encouraged to stand on
 his own two feet. Yes we help
 people of course we help people.
 But for those that can do, they
 must just get up and do. And if
 something's wrong, they shouldn't
 just whine about it, they should
 get in there and DO something
 about it, change things.

The female guests exchange glances. A half-chuckle from someone.

PORTLY HOST
 With all due respect, Miss
 Roberts, what may have served in
 Grantham-

MARGARET
 Can serve very well for the people
 of Dartford too.

MALE GUEST
 Really?

A general sense of quiet incredulity.

MARGARET
 I know much more than those who
 have never lived on a limited
 income. Just like the man or woman
 on the street, when I am short one
 week, I have to make economies the
 next.

GREY SUITED MAN
 Nothing like a slice of fiscal
 responsibility.

MARGARET

A man might call it fiscal responsibility, a woman might call it good housekeeping.

MALE GUEST

I'm not sure a home economics lesson is quite what the Dartford constituents need. They see industry being nationalized, the unions on the up, the pound on the slide...whoever can sort that lot out - he's my man.

MARGARET

Or woman?

Denis lets out a spontaneous guffaw as the host and hostess exchange looks. He signals 'Get them out of here'. The men rise.

HOSTESS

Ladies shall we ?

PORTLY HOST

Miss Roberts, do join the ladies.

The ladies scurry to the sitting room. Margaret is the last to leave.

INT. SITTING ROOM. DARTFORD. 1949. EVENING.

As Margaret closes the door to the dining room -

PORTLY HOST (O.S.)

Well. That's told us!

The men laugh raucously. She turns to the ladies who are regrouping at the fireplace and regarding her with suspicion.

INT.DINING ROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT. EVENING.

The aftermath of the muted dinner party-

MARGARET at the helm, a small whisky just visible nestled next to her wine glass. She is flushed and nicely mellow surrounded by mainly MALE GUESTS-

MICHAEL

So, Margaret, how would you have dealt with this if you'd been Prime Minister?

MARGARET looks at him, her flicker of bemusement.

...slowly registering across the faces of her FRIENDS and COLLEAGUES including CAROL.

MARGARET

Where?

CAROL

The bombings, mummy. Today?

MARGARET still lost

CAROL (CONT'D)

We were just talking about them?

MARGARET deflects, reaching for her glass, it trembles unsteady in her grasp.

MARGARET

No, uhm, yes - we have always lived alongside evil. But it has never been so patient, so avid for carnage, so eager to carry innocents with it into oblivion.

MALE GUEST

So, would you -

MARGARET

Western civilization must root out this evil, wherever it hides, or she risks defeat at the hands of global terror in a nuclear age. Unimaginable!

Appreciative murmur of agreements amongst the listening party-

PETER

The Prime Minister gave a very good statement I thought.

MARGARET

Yes. Clever man. Quite a smoothie.

Laughter-

INT. DRAWING ROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT. NIGHT.

MARGARET says final farewells to a guest. He walks away as another couple approach.

MARGARET

You don't mind if I sit down...

Sitting down on a nearby chair, MARGARET looks with feigned recollection at the FEMALE GUEST as she sinks down on the ground in front of her, gripping MARGARET's hand.

FEMALE GUEST

I heard you speak at conference in 1984 in Brighton just after the IRA bombed the Grand Hotel. You were remarkable. I hope you appreciate what an inspiration you have been for women like myself.

MARGARET hesitates, smiles, nods to herself, considering-

MARGARET

It used to be about trying to do something. Now its about trying to be someone.

The FEMALE GUEST nods and scrambled to her feet, clearly concerned, shooting a look to her HUSBAND standing beside her, waiting to depart.

FEMALE GUEST

Well anyway, I...thank you.

MARGARET

Good night to you.

MARGARET sits alone. In the background, the chatter of Carol saying final farewells.

CAROL (O.S.)

Great to see you, thank you very much for coming.

MALE GUEST (O.S.)

Oh, thank you. It was lovely, absolutely lovely. And I'm so pleased to see your mother looking so well.

INT. DRESSING ROOM. HOUSE. CHESTER SQUARE. PRESENT.NIGHT.

A mirror lined dressing room-

CAROL helps MARGARET with her shoes.

CAROL

OK...hold on to me...that's right.

MARGARET struggles with the catch on her pearls

MARGARET

Can you do the clasp, I can't quite -

CAROL hurries to help her, MARGARET quietly concedes. Fingers fumble to unclasp the pearls-

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Thank you.

CAROL drops the pearls into a jewelry box, close to MARGARET, staring back at their reflections.

CAROL

You've got an eyelash.

CAROL catches the stray eyelash on the tip of her finger, holding it close to MARGARET, with a smile-

CAROL (CONT'D)

Make a wish.

MARGARET, closes her eyes until-

MARGARET blows. She opens them smiles. CAROL smiles.

CAROL (CONT'D)

I spoke to Doctor Michael today-

MARGARET glances away, deflecting.

CAROL (CONT'D)

He is very good and very expensive-

MARGARET ignores her-

CAROL (CONT'D)

...I know you're not due to see him for another month but I've spoken to him and he can fit you in tomorrow.

SILENCE-

CAROL (CONT'D)

Just for a check up.

(silence)

Ma please-

MARGARET

What does Mark think about it?

CAROL

Mark?

MARGARET

Yes. Tell him to come up. I want to talk to him about it.

CAROL, hesitates, with concern-

CAROL

Mark's with Sarah and the children.

MARGARET nods, heading through into the bathroom.

MARGARET

Well tell him to come up and see me after he's kissed them good night, would you Carol darling?

INT. BEDROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. PRESENT. NIGHT.

MARGARET, sitting on her bed, glances expectantly towards the door. Carol sits down beside her.

CAROL

He's not here Mummy.

MARGARET hesitates, CAROL using all her might, not to crumble under MARGARET's cool gaze-

CAROL (CONT'D)

Mark lives in South Africa...

MARGARET inwardly flinches.

CAROL (CONT'D)

...you are not Prime Minister anymore and Dad is...Dad is dead-

Silence-

MARGARET

You look exhausted, dear. You really must try to get some sleep. Taxis'll be few and far between at this hour...

CAROL

Righty-ho. Night night Ma. Sleep well.

MARGARET

Good night, dear.

The slam of a door. MARGARET sits, alone.

INT. SADLERS WELLS. LONDON. 1950. NIGHT.

MARGARET'S POV of Denis turning to her in the theatre. He smiles.

MARGARET's FINGERS absently grazing over the programme, in time with the music-

SUDDENLY a closed fist reaches out, then opens to reveal a sugar mouse. Margaret's fingers reach for it, but it's teasingly withdrawn. Finally, she takes its.

She turns to smile at DENIS, her face is glowing with happiness-

INT. TOWN HALL 1950. NIGHT.

MARGARET sits on the edge of a trestle table, scrunching a rosette in her hand. The Town Hall is empty save for a couple of Volunteers stacking chairs and sweeping the floor. The litter of election night is everywhere.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

Twenty-four-year-old Miss Margaret Roberts lost her bid to win a seat in Parliament today, but she has put new life into the Dartford Conservative Association. Winning candidate Mr Dodds had better watch out, this bright young woman is on his tail.

DENIS appears in the doorway, carrying fish and chips. He slides them down in front of her.

DENIS

Eat!

MARGARET almost smiles. Then sinks once more into misery.

MARGARET

Disaster.

DENIS

Hang on...Hang on...Hang on...

DENIS fishes in his pocket pulling out a hip flask. An impromptu supper made. MARGARET takes in the aftermath of rosettes, the whiff of defeat all around.

DENIS (CONT'D)

You shaved thousands off their majority. You did splendidly.

MARGARET

Not splendidly enough.

DENIS
Ah I see. Self pity.

MARGARET eyes him, mid chip-

DENIS (CONT'D)
No one is saying you don't need a safe seat. You deserve a safe seat. But it does not come unless you learn to play the game a little.

MARGARET
What game?

She is fuming but he regroups with a big breath.

DENIS
You are a grocer's daughter-

MARGARET
(fiercely)
-And proud of being-

He grabs her hand, silencing her.

DENIS
- in *their* eyes. A single grocer's daughter. But if you were to become the wife of a moderately successful businessman-

For the first time, we see MARGARET taken by surprise.

DENIS (CONT'D)
You'd get to parliament, and I'd get to be the happiest man in- in wherever they select you.
(SILENCE)
Margaret, will you marry me?

She is genuinely stunned.

DENIS (CONT'D)
Well ?

She is frozen. Then she begins to smile and nod her head and smile.

MARGARET
Yes. Yes!

He leans over and kisses her, long and passionately until-

DENIS
What ?

MARGARET

I love you so much but...I will never be one of those women Denis - who stays silent and pretty on the arm of her husband. Or remote and alone in the kitchen doing the washing up for that matter.

DENIS

(trying to retain the moment)

We'll get a help for that.

He leans forward to kiss her again but she pulls away a little.

MARGARET

No - one's life must matter, Denis. Beyond the cooking and the cleaning and the children, one's life must mean more than that - I cannot die washing up a tea cup.

He sits up and stares as if seeing her for the first time.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I mean it Denis, say you understand.

DENIS

That's why I want to marry you, my dear.

She kisses him.

A CHINK of a TEACUP-

They pull apart. FLUSHED and GIGGLING on seeing-

A LONE WOMAN enters the hall, cleaning up the last of the tea cups, and generally tidying.

DENIS (CONT'D)

Now eat.

MARGARET smiles her joy at him as 'SHALL WE DANCE' swells.

And now she's in his arms as they dance, swirling through the election debris, eyes only for each other.

INT. DRAWING ROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT.
NIGHT.

MARGARET now on all fours, struggling with her glasses. A pile of DVD's on the floor, *The KING and I* amongst them momentarily catching her eye until-

A DVD with hand-written scrawl that we can't quite read.

MARGARET flicks open the box, struggling to get the DVD out.

Fiddling with the DVD player, MARGARET puts in the disc and considers, squinting at the remote, trying to make the DVD player work until, suddenly...

Super 8 footage - 1959

Children on a beach in wind-swept, grainy super 8. Denis with a golf club and ping pong balls practicing his drive from a tee, sending ball after ball skying into the sea. Mark and Carol charge into the water to retrieve them.

MARGARET

There they are, my little twins.
 Mark...

DENIS approaches the camera laughing and appears to take hold of it. MARGARET is seen sitting on a wobbly camping stool, hardly dressed for the beach, surrounded by papers weighed held down by pebbles. She merrily returns to her work.

DENIS

Cornwall, wasn't it? Bloody hell... Look at 'em, little imps. You never really got golf, did you?

DENIS sits behind her on the sofa in a dressing gown, watching the footage. She sips her whisky.

MARGARET

You look happy.

DENIS

Yes, I do, don't I? You're drinking too much.

MARGARET ignores him.

DENIS (CONT'D)

Whatcha doing?

DENIS looks at MARGARET, unwavering. She resumes a search-

DENIS (CONT'D)
Not like you. Looking back.

MARGARET SUDDENLY presses rewind on the remote, clutched in her hand.

DENIS (CONT'D)
Don't want to dig around too deep,
M. Don't know what you might find.

The rapid rewind of Denis swinging his golf club.

DENIS (CONT'D)
You can rewind it, but you can't
change it.

She freezes the image of him turning to camera, laughing.

MARGARET
They grow up so fast.

Margaret turns with something to say, but Denis doesn't seem to be there anymore.

INT. DRAWING ROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT.NIGHT.

Now on the screen, Mark on a swing. MARGARET'S face softens.

MARGARET
Mark.

He turns and rushes towards the camera, whooshing past it.

Without breaking step, suddenly, he's in the room, running past Margaret, still cheering and whooping.

MARGARET's hand, just skimming MARK's golden curls. As he moves on, MARGARET's curiosity caught following him out and down the corridor of Chester Square, seeing the Mark and Carol disappear round a corner.

INT. HALLWAY. HOUSE. FARNBOROUGH. KENT. 1959. DAWN.

The view beyond-

SPEAKER VO
Mr Eric Deakins, Labour...
13,437...

The CRUNCH of gravel as CAROL and MARK race across the drive towards a blue ford car, covered with Tory blue streamers and a *VOTE FOR THATCHER* poster scrawled with the words *Victory*.

INT. DRAWING ROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT.
NIGHT.

MARGARET now on all fours, struggling with her glasses. A pile of DVD's on the floor, *The KING and I* amongst them momentarily catching her eye until-

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DENIS (CONT'D)

Whatcha doing?

DENIS looks at MARGARET, unwavering. She resumes a search-

MARGARET fingers brush dark panelled walls, making her way along endless corridors.

Gothic arches, venerable busts, wood panelling and stone.

MARGARET's pov as she stays to the side of the impressive corridor. She passes men in suits and groups. Others come towards her and notice her.

Her POV as she pushes open a first door 'TEA ROOM' - a circle of men turn round in chorus as if something with three heads has appeared.

POV of a second opening door marked MEMBERS. A row of urinals. Two headless bodies come towards the camera, scrambling to zip up their flies.

POV of the promise of sanctuary. LADY MEMBERS. The door opens onto a cupboard sized space. An ironing board.

A sea of men's Oxford shoes from ground level. A pair of woman's shoes appear amongst them. They go on tip toe.

From above we see Margaret's hat amongst the sea of mens heads and shoulders. Margaret is carried along in the sea of MALE MP's OXFORD SHOES.

AIREY NEAVE [Extremely dapper, friendly 43] approaches MARGARET.

AIREY NEAVE
Mrs Thatcher ! Airey Neave.
Welcome to the madhouse. Follow
me.

The doors swing open-

INT. HOUSE OF COMMONS CHAMBER. 1974. DAY

MARGARET, now SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION, on the front bench, wearing a neat blue suit and a hat, a phalanx of MINISTERS sitting beside and around her, BLUE and GREY SUITED MEN, almost at first glance indistinguishable, with PRIME MINISTER EDWARD HEATH (late 50's), neat, effete, slumped rather forlornly on the bench.

MARGARET, her speech and papers in her hand is fighting hard but the OPPOSITION LABOUR BENCHES scent blood - and they literally bray, getting to their feet and shaking their order papers in her face.

The SPEAKER tries to control the chamber but his VOICE is almost lost in the bedlam.

SPEAKER

The Right Honourable Lady the
Secretary of State for Education.

MARGARET

The right honourable gentleman
knows that we have no choice but
to shut down the schools!

Cries of 'Shame!' From the opposition. The chamber
reduced to a bear-pit. HEATH glum and offering no help to
MARGARET whose voice becomes increasingly shrill.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Because his union paymasters have
called a strike deliberately to
cripple our economy. Teachers
cannot teach when there is no
heating, no lighting in their
classrooms. And I ask the
honourable gentleman, whose fault
is that?

SHADOW MINISTER

Methinks the Right Honourable lady
doth screech to much. If she wants
us to take her seriously she must
learn to calm down!

The OPPOSITION BENCHES love that, rocking in their seats,
laughing... falsely of course.

But MARGARET is aware that there are many MEN behind her,
on the government benches, who are also sniggering in
agreement.

MARGARET

If the right honorable gentleman
could perhaps attend more closely
to WHAT I am saying, rather than
HOW I am saying it, he may receive
a valuable education in spite of
himself!

Her opposite number Shadow Minister looks almost smug:
smiling, pointing a finger at her.

SHADOW MINISTER

Why has this Conservative
government failed? Why has it
forced so many in the public
sector into taking strike action
to save their own jobs?

It brings the OPPOSITION benches to their feet, shouting,
applauding, stamping...

EXT. WESTMINSTER STREET. 1974. DAY

MARGARET walking with AIREY NEAVE towards Downing Street for a Cabinet Meeting.

All around, heaped high on either side as far as the eye can see are bags of rubbish. But not neatly stacked, just thrown there, many of them rotting down, spilling their filthy, putrid contents onto the street.

SHADOW MINISTER VO
 Minister, the breakdown of
 essential public services -
 transport, electricity, sanitation
 is not the fault of the trades
 unions but of this Conservative
 government in which you so
 shamefully serve!

The stench is awful - and MARGARET'S expression reflects that as she picks her way through.

INT. CABINET ROOM. DOWNING STREET. 1974. NIGHT.

The ranks of BESPECTACLED GREY-SUITED MINISTERS at the Cabinet table, including GEOFFREY HOWE.

HEATH
 So these power cuts will continue
 unless we can reach a compromise.

EDWARD HEATH is in mid-flow.

HEATH (CONT'D)
 The miners are asking for a 35%
 increase in wages. Obviously we
 can't go anywhere near that. The
 unions are not our enemies and
 never have been. We want - and
 have always wanted - the broadest
 consensus...

The MINISTERS nod. MARGARET determinedly edges a little forward so that she is in equal line with the other MALE MINISTERS.

HEATH (CONT'D)
 I'm sure we are all in agreement
 that we must do nothing for the
 moment that will further inflame
 the current situation.

MINISTER 1
 Hear hear, Prime Minister.

MARGARET leans forward for a better view, trying to catch his eye. HEATH wavers, mid-speech. All turn to look at MARGARET - who sits unwavering. HEATH resumes.

HEATH

- the fact of the matter is, it's absolutely crucial that we are seen by the public to be acting as conciliators and not aggressors.

(Finally
acknowledging
Margaret)

Yes, Education Secretary.

MARGARET

Yes...

All eyes TURN on her again, hearing the reservation in her voice.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Prime Minister, with the Miners' leader calling today for the army to mutiny in support of the strikes, this seems the wrong time for conciliation.

SUDDENLY ALL THE LIGHTS GO OUT.

A lot of 'bloody hell' 'oh for god's sake'.

HEATH

Be patient. They'll come back on in a minute.

A beam of light cuts through, just for an instant picking out HEATH'S moon-like face surrounded by darkness. MARGARET holds the small torch.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Thank you, Margaret.

A snigger, then the lights flicker back on.

HEATH (CONT'D)

Your thoughts are duly noted.

MARGARET turns of the torch and clicks her handbag shut in satisfaction. Heath's words echo in her head, 'compromise...compromise...compromise...' An inward look as she's caught by a memory.

ALFRED (O.S.)

*We on this island are strong.
We're self-reliant. Napoleon
called us a nation of shopkeepers.*

INT. TOWN HALL. 1949. NIGHT.

The packed town hall, ALFRED ROBERTS in full flow on stage.

ALFRED

He meant it as an insult but to me it's a compliment. That's why he couldn't beat us, and that's why Hitler can't beat us.

The crowd of men applaud. The lone woman in their midst, YOUNG MARGARET watches her father, face aglow.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

We Conservatives believe in giving people the freedom and opportunity to fulfil their own potential, especially the young. There's no good in pretending we're all equal, we're not all the same, never have been, never will be. We should encourage our children to aspire to achieve more than we have, for our children today will be the leaders of tomorrow.

INT. CAR. STREET. CENTRAL LONDON. 1974. DAWN

...CAROL and MARGARET seated, driving steadily along a deserted street. MARGARET thoughtful as the radio plays.

VOICE ON THE RADIO

It's 1974 and you'd think it was WWII. Blackouts, no petrol. It's a mess. Heath should resign now and make way for someone who's not afraid to tackle the unions.

CAROL'S nervous prattle begins to break through.

CAROL

I swear, it's all gone completely out of my head. My driving instructor thinks I should pass but I feel as if I've hardly had any lessons. Ridiculous isn't it? Maybe third time lucky.

MARGARET

Right. The only thing you should remember is that everyone else is either reckless or inept. And often both.

MARGARET eyes the road, gesturing CAROL to move forward.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

One must be brave if one is to
take the wheel-

CAROL

Right-o.

MARGARET

Move over... Move to your right a
little bit...

CAROL

But if I move to the right aren't
I on the wrong side of the road?

MARGARET

Carol!

CAROL

Well he's in the way!

MARGARET

To the right. Move to the right!

A yelp from CAROL as the car swerves a little, narrowly
missing a lone CYCLIST-

MARGARET (CONT'D)

So sorry! Terribly sorry!

MARGARET throws a wave from the wound down window. The
CYCLIST swerves on recognizing her, watching as the car
goes round and round the square, almost balletic.

CAROL

Hey, look at me, driving!

CAROL's squeals of delight, let loose on the open road.

The tyres screech on the corner.

INT. KITCHEN. FLOOD STREET. LONDON. 1974. DAWN.

Laughter -

VOICES on the approach-

CAROL

Thanks Ma, that was terrific! I
really feel I've got a handle on
it now.

CAROL and MARGARET entering kitchen, still giddy from
their adventure.

CAROL (CONT'D)

You should have seen us, Pa.

DENIS in his dressing gown burning toast and attempting to make breakfast -

MARGARET

Have you been trying to make breakfast? For Goodness sake, Denis!

DENIS scrapes down the toast, eggs boiling in the pan.

DENIS

I can boil a bloody egg.

CAROL

Mummy took me for a test drive - We went absolutely everywhere. All over the place -

MARGARET

(sudden/cutting in)
I've decided. I'm going to run.

MARGARET smiles, a growing resolution gripping her.

DENIS

What for?

MARGARET

I'm going to run for Leader of the Party.

CAROL'S utter disappointment on seeing she has lost MARGARET already.

CAROL

Silly me!

CAROL storms out of the kitchen.

DENIS

(calling after)
Good luck!

CAROL (O.S.)

All the time I thought I was having a driving lesson, it was all about my mother, just for a change!

MARGARET

What's she on about?

DENIS

It's her driving test this morning!

MARGARET

Oh, right. Of course.

A BEAT.

DENIS

Are you saying you want to be
Prime Minister?

MARGARET

(with false patience)

What I'm saying is that someone
must force the point, say the
unsayable. None of these men have
the guts.

MARGARET sees the burnt toast and energetically starts
clearing up and putting more bread under the grill.

DENIS

The Prime Minister has been very
loyal to you, MT.

He tries, with a trembling hand, to scoop boiled eggs
from the pan.

MARGARET

But he's weak, and he's weakened
the party. One must know when to
go.

(glancing at him)

You're shaking.

She reaches out.

DENIS

I can do it!

DENIS pulls his arm away, sending boiled eggs flying.

SILENCE.

MARGARET

Goodness me! What is the matter
with everyone this morning?

A beat. He looks utterly fragile.

DENIS

I've told you what the matter is.
The business is a bit rocky at the
moment and the Doctor thinks I
need a rest.

MARGARET

And do you need a rest?

It's almost challenging. He doesn't answer and she doesn't notice.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

We both know that it's highly unlikely that I would ever be elected leader, I'll never be elected leader. But I will run. I will run. Just to nip at their heels and make them reaffirm the principles on which the Conservative Party must stand. There's so much to do.

She smiles.

DENIS

(sotto voce)

You're insufferable, Margaret, do you know that?

MARGARET

Denis, you married someone who is committed to public service, you knew that. And it is my duty -

DENIS

(interrupts)

Don't call it duty. It's ambition which has got you this far. Ambition. And the rest of us, me, the children, we can all go to hell!

The SLAM of the door, DENIS gone-

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

Don't worry about me, I'll be fine!

INT. SITTING ROOM. CHESTER SQ. PRESENT. NIGHT

MARGARET and DENIS sit on the sofa.

MARGARET

Where did you go?

DENIS

South Africa.

MARGARET

Yes.

INT. KITCHEN. FLOOD STREET. LONDON. 1974. DAWN

MARGARET eats breakfast alone, engrossed in the newspaper.

DENIS (V.O.)

How many days passed before you realized I was gone? Probably had to ask the cleaning woman where I was.

INT. SITTING ROOM. CHESTER SQ. PRESENT. NIGHT

MARGARET grips her whiskey, shaking her head.

MARGARET

When did I lose track of everyone?

DENIS

Too busy climbing the greasy pole MT.

Cutting in -

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Mrs Thatcher I understand you recently visited the United States of America.

MARGARET'S attention is caught by an old interview, playing on the TV. She leans forward. On screen, she sits in a neat hat, leaning forward eagerly.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

What was it you took away from that visit which may be of value here in Great Britain?

INT. STUDIO. LONDON. 1975. NIGHT

MARGARET perched on a chair, smiling at the TV
INTERVIEWER -

MARGARET

Oh that's rather easy to answer, actually. They are unafraid of success.

INT. REECE'S OFFICE. LONDON. 1975. DAY

MARGARET is watching the same interview on a TV monitor. She is watching herself intently, as are REECE and AIREY NEAVE. They are polar opposites, REECE flamboyant to NEAVE's bluff.

She sounds very plummy, like a Conservative party wife from the shires. And she wears a hat.

MARGARET ON TELEVISION

We in Great Britain and in Europe are formed mainly by our history. They on the other hand are formed by their philosophy. Not by what has been, but by what can be. Oh, we have a great deal that we can learn from them, yes. Oh yes!

MARGARET is trapped in the moment - but the two men exchange a glance. NEAVE freezes the picture. MARGARET smiles uneasily, like someone expecting a compliment. REECE considers her, long and hard. It is a little unsettling until-

REECE

Well er...For a start, that hat has got to go. And the pearls. In fact I think all hats may have to go. You look and sound like a privileged Conservative wife and we've already got her vote. You've got lovely hair but we need to do something with it - to make it more-

AIREY NEAVE

Important.

REECE

Yes. Give it more impact. But the main thing is your voice. Its too high. It has no authority.

AIREY NEAVE

Methinks the Lady doth screech too much

REECE

People don't want to be harangued by a woman or hectored. Persuaded yes. That 'oh yes' at the end of the interview, that's authoritative, that's the voice of a leader.

MARGARET stares at him.

MARGARET

It's all very well to talk about changing my voice, Mr Reece, but for some of my colleagues to imagine me as their leader would be like imagining, I don't know, being led into battle by their chambermaid. It's my background, and my sex. No matter how I've tried, and I have tried, to fit in, I will never be truly one of them.

Both REECE and NEAVE are aware that she has spoken very nakedly - and is thus extremely vulnerable.

REECE

If I may say so - I think that's your trump card. You're flying in the face of everything the Tories have been thus far. It's really very exciting. One simply has to maximise your appeal, bring out all your qualities and make you look, and sound, like the leader that you could be.

NEAVE

You've got it in you to go the whole distance.

REECE

Absolutely.

MARGARET

Prime Minister?! Oh no. Oh no no no. In Britain? There will be no female Prime Minister here, not in my lifetime. No. And I told Airey, I don't expect to win the leadership, but I am going to run. Just to shake up the party.

NEAVE moves in intently-

NEAVE

Respectfully, Margaret, I disagree. If you want to change this party, lead it. If you want to change the country, lead it. What we're talking about here today is surface. What's crucial is that you hold your course, and stay true to who you are. Never be anything other than yourself.

MARGARET, though flattered, looks sceptical.

REECE

Leave us to do the rest.

A BEAT

MARGARET

Gentlemen, I am in your hands. I may be persuaded to surrender the hat. But the pearls were a gift from my husband on the birth of our twins and they are absolutely non-negotiable.

MARGARET smiles at them.

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM. NATIONAL THEATRE. LONDON. 1975. DAY

MARGARET stands humming, a THEATRICAL COACH presses her hand to MARGARET'S stomach.

THEATRICAL VOICE COACH

And...bring it down.

MARGARET hums lower, tries to project her voice.

MARGARET

Maaaaaaaaaaaaa.

THEATRICAL VOICE COACH

Good, I think we can loose the handbag, Mrs Thatcher...Hands down the sides...Because this isn't really about the voice, it's about belief...A nice deep breath.

REECE and NEAVE are watching and monitoring the performance. DENIS, though present, is having a crafty fag by the window.

THEATRICAL VOICE COACH (CONT'D)

If you're calling Mr Thatcher, how would you do that?

MARGARET looks over at him.

MARGARET

(calls)
Denis.

He doesn't react.

THEATRICAL VOICE COACH

Yes, I want more authority, I want conviction, I want -

MARGARET
 (a little more
 authority)
 Denis.

THEATRICAL VOICE COACH
 That's right, one more time, deep
 breath -

She puts on her new, lower voice.

MARGARET
 Denis.

And DENIS reacts immediately, like a guilty thing surprised, stabbing out his cigarette, turning quickly towards her.

DENIS
 Yes MT!

EXT. YARD. ICE CREAM FACTORY. DAY.

MARGARET makes her way through a crowd of applauding workers in crisp white uniforms. Like them, she wears a white cap on her head.

MARGARET
 You are the backbone of our
 nation! Small firms like Loveday's
 Ice Cream. How are you? So nice to
 meet you ladies.

General merriment as MARGARET, now inside an ice-cream van, has a go at dispensing an ice cream from the machine.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 I'll just have a small one,
 because I'm watching my figure.
 (handing the cone
 out)
 That's for you young man!

INT. HAIR SALON. LONDON. 1975. DAY

MARGARET is having new hair colour and the colourist is 75 percent through putting her hair in foil.

MARGARET (V.O.)
 I passionately believe it's the
 growth of small businesses into
 larger ones that is critical for
 Britain's future.

REECE and NEAVE are sitting nearby, both of them reading the Financial Times.

EXT. YARD. ICE CREAM FACTORY. DAY.

MARGARET among the ladies again.

MARGARET
It has to be something icy on a stick for Denis.

Laughter.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
(returning to her subject)
That's the only way we will produce jobs, real jobs, jobs that sustain.

INT. HAIR SALON. LONDON. 1975. DAY

MARGARET sitting under the dryer, cooking her new hair, still correcting paperwork while REECE and NEAVE look on, twiddling their thumbs.

EXT. FACTORY. LONDON. 1975. DAY

MARGARET is standing on an impromptu stage outside a factory. She has a hard hat on her head.

MARGARET
The Trade Union Movement was founded to protect workers. Now it persecutes them. It stops them from working. It is killing jobs and it is bringing this country to its knees. I say enough. It's time to get up. It's time to go to work. It's time to put the Great back into Great Britain!

INT. HAIR SALON. 1975. DAY

The bouffant is now apparent. REECE AND NEAVE watch in awe.

INT. BACKSTAGE. CONFERENCE HALL. BRIGHTON. 1979. DAY

A darkened backstage. MARGARET, clutching her speech, goes over her lines. A FEMALE AIDE sprays her hair.

She looks up, starts to move towards the light.

AIREY NEAVE is suddenly next to her.

NEAVE
Give 'em hell!

He looks her up and down, with a smile.

NEAVE (CONT'D)
You look magnificent. Next stop
Prime Minister.

MARGARET
Oh Airey...

As from the stage -

ANNOUNCER
The leader of the Conservative
Party, Margaret Thatcher!

MARGARET pushes back her shoulders and walks into battle
to the sound of GROWING APPLAUSE.

INT. MAIN HALL. CONFERENCE HALL. BRIGHTON. 1979. DAY

BRITAIN NEEDS THE CONSERVATIVES bannered overhead and
hung with Union Jacks. MARGARET a swathe of blue, as she
passes through her GREY SUITED CABINET.

From behind she stands, arms outstretched, accepting the
applause, a shock of bright blonde hair as she stands
before a sea of CONSERVATIVE DELEGATES holding up letter
cards WE LOVE YOU MAGGIE!

Wedges of fanatical party faithful on their feet in a
kind of rapture. The blessed Margaret !

DENIS just visible with REECE, HOWE, PYM, HESELTINE and
several other GREY SUITED MINISTERS of her cabinet,
seated close behind now jumping to their feet, with
obvious relief and delight -

RAPTUROUS APPLAUSE, FLASH BULBS POPPING

MARGARET smiles, glorious, catching DENIS' eye. He is
brimming with pride. AIREY NEAVE beams at his protegee.

INT. CORRIDOR. HOUSE. CHESTER SQUARE. PRESENT. DAY.

Close on a photograph of MARGARET and AIREY NEAVE.
MARGARET sits looking at it, her coat on, her handbag on
her lap.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAR PARK. HOUSE OF COMMONS. 1979. EVE.

MARGARET is loading papers and files into the boot of her car. AIREY NEAVE drives towards her, winding down his window.

NEAVE

Good night Margaret. My money's on the filly to win!

MARGARET

Oh, thanks Airey. Goodnight.

He laughs and drives towards the exit of the car park.

As MARGARET closes the boot and opens the door to get in the car suddenly there's a MASSIVE EXPLOSION, the sound magnified by being in the cavernous underground.

For a few seconds we don't know what's happened.

Through the smoke we see MARGARET running up the ramp towards us.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

No. No, no! Airey!

Her POV of the fireball of Neave's car. As Margaret looks in horror at the scene. Her shattered face.

NEWS V.O.

The Irish National Liberation Army has claimed responsibility for the death of Airey Neave, Margaret Thatcher's spokesman on Northern Ireland.

INT. CONFERENCE HALL. NIGHT.

MARGARET on the conference podium, blinking back tears. Behind her, Denis' face etched with the same sorrow.

INT. STEPS. HOUSE OF COMMONS. DAY

MARGARET walks alone down the grand stairway, sombre, deep in thought.

INT. CORRIDOR. CHESTER SQUARE. PRESENT. DAY.

MARGARET looks up from the photograph, tears in her eyes.

AIREY NEAVE (V.O.)

If you want to change the party, lead it.

(MORE)

AIREY NEAVE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

If you want to change the country,
lead it. You've got it in you to
go the whole distance!

On MARGARET as memories flood in. A TV headline
announces: ELECTION 1979.

INT. CONFERENCE HALL. NIGHT

MARGARET on the podium.

MARGARET

Now, as the test draws near, I ask
your help. That together we can
shake off the shackles of
socialism and restore to greatness
this country that we love so much.
And the only way is for the
Conservative Party to win!

The black streak of MARGARET'S car, a blur of colour,
faces, waving flags -

TV footage of polling night. Swingometers, pollsters,
impressionistic snatches of reported speech.

More footage of PEOPLE coming out of polling stations.

Jubilant crowds applauding..

MARGARET, silhouetted in her iconic stance, arms aloft...

INT. CAR. DOWNING STREET. LONDON. 1979. DAY.

MARGARET peering out of the window, hands sunk in the
lap, a flash of the Royal blue fabric of her skirt,
clenched in fingers.

NEWS READER (V.O.)

It's Friday the 4th of May, an
historic day for Britain, a
Conservative government led by
Mrs. Thatcher is set to lead -

NEWS READER 2 (V.O.)

Mrs Gandhi in India, but never in
the West has there been a woman
Prime Minister.

NEWS READER 3 (V.O.)

The place that she has secured in
British history, as the first
woman ever to be invited to form a
government.

(MORE)

NEW READER 3 (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The bonus of one of the most
famous addresses in the world,
Number 10 Downing Street.

NOISE. FLAGS. BANNERS read 'We LOVE YOU MAGGIE' blur
through the window, an abstract cacophony of noise and
colour-

DENIS

This is it, steady the buffs old
girl.

He clasps her hand for a moment as MARGARET smiles at
him.

The door swings open-

EXT. DOWNING STREET. LONDON. 1979. DAY.

The CAMERA from behind on MARGARET rising up out of the
car, to face a waiting PRESS CORP. The jostle of a POLICE
OFFICER, DENIS and OTHERS press her either side-

MARGARET

I should just like to say that I
take very seriously the trust the
British people placed in me today,
and I will work hard every day to
live up to that responsibility.
And now, I should like to share
with you a prayer of St Francis of
Assisi: Where there is discord may
we bring harmony... Where there is
error may we bring truth... Where
there is doubt may we bring
faith... Where there is despair
may we bring hope..

The CAMERA rises up, high above MARGARET until she is
just a blue dot, on the dark tarmac, a lone woman
standing facing the circle of cameras and microphones.

The door of Number 10 looms ahead.

INT. DRAWING ROOM. DOWNING STREET. LONDON. 1979. DAY.

The cheers go over ..

The CABINET gathering for a group shot-

MARGARET

Shoulders back, tummies in!

Laughter. Michael Heseltine, standing behind MARGARET,
reaches out to smooth a stray lock of her hair.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Oh. Thank you, Michael.

MARGARET seated at the heart of her entire CABINET, as if she is royalty.

The FLASH of the CAMERA - the image frozen.

INT. CORRIDOR. HOUSE. CHESTER SQUARE. PRESENT. DAY.

The same image, framed on a side table beside MARGARET. The distant hum of a hoover.

MARGARET

I'm perfectly healthy. There's no need for any of this.

Denis appears, his hand inside his shoe, polishing it vigorously.

DENIS

Just let them look under the bonnet, MT. Check everything is hunky dory.

MARGARET hesitates. She sits in silence until-

MARGARET

Really it's becoming quite tiresome.

DENIS

What is?

MARGARET

You.

(beat)

I was on my own for twenty four years before I met you and I can manage perfectly well without you now. So will you please go away and stop bothering me.

INT. CONSULTING ROOM. HARLEY STREET. LONDON. PRESENT.DAY

A distinguished consulting room-

MARGARET sits silent, as an EMINENT DOCTOR checks her blood pressure. The beep of the machine, steady and monotonous until-

DOCTOR

Just look straight at me, straight ahead, that's it.

The DOCTOR scribbles some notes, considering-

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Are you noticing night sweats?

MARGARET

No

DOCTOR

Hallucinations?

MARGARET hesitates. She shakes her head.

MARGARET

No.

DOCTOR

Sleep?

MARGARET

Yes, I sleep. Four, five hours a night.

DOCTOR

So you wake early?

MARGARET

And I stay up late. I always have.

She looks at him as if he really should know this about her. The DOCTOR notes this down.

DOCTOR

We just want to keep abreast of it.

MARGARET

Yes. Of course.

DOCTOR

Grief is a very natural state.

MARGARET

My husband has been gone for years. Cancer.

DOCTOR

Carol says you've decided to let his things go. Probably a good thing.

MARGARET

Yes. It was my idea. To Oxfam. Perfectly good stuff. People can use these things.

DOCTOR
 Still it must be a bit
 disorientating. You are bound to
 be feeling.

MARGARET
 What? What am I 'bound to be
 feeling'?

The DOCTOR looks up from his note taking, hearing the
 quiet challenge in MARGARET's voice.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 People don't 'think' any more.
 They '*feel*'. 'How are you
feeling?' 'Oh I don't *feel*
 comfortable with that' 'Oh, I'm so
 sorry but we, the group were
feeling...' D'you know, one of the
 great problems of our age is that
 we are governed by people who care
 more about feelings than thoughts
 and ideas.

(beat)

Now thoughts and ideas. That
 interests me.

(beat)

Ask me what I am thinking-

The DOCTOR hesitates, letting MARGARET settle until-

DOCTOR
 What are you thinking, Margaret?

MARGARET looks at the DOCTOR, quietly struggling with a
 fury, threatening to unleash-

MARGARET
 Watch your thoughts, for they
 become words. Watch your words,
 for they become actions. Watch
 your actions, for they become
 habits. Watch your habits, for
 they become your character. And
 watch your character, for it
 becomes your destiny. What we
 think, we become. My father always
 said that.

(beat)

And I think I am fine.

(beat)

But I do so appreciate your kind
 concern.

The sudden and persistent buzz of an intercom-

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 Oh, do please answer that.

MARGARET holds his gaze, with quiet unwavering steel unsettling the DOCTOR a little.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

It might be someone who needs you.

The DOCTOR reluctantly answers his intercom-

INT. CORRIDOR CHESTER SQUARE. PRESENT. DUSK.

JUNE heads up the stairs, MARGARET following behind.

JUNE

I'll give Carol a quick ring, let her know we're back, then I'll put your electric blanket on.

MARGARET nods. Looking through the bannisters, her eyes fall on-

A golf ball running along the floor. MARGARET considers, looks up-

DENNIS OOV

Steady, steady, steady! Damn. Fore!

The ball bounces down the wooden stairs.

INT. KITCHEN. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT. DUSK.

MARGARET opens the fridge. A cold plated lunch resting on a shelf.

DENIS

What about that medicine man, eh?
Ah. Cold supper. Standards are slipping Margaret.

MARGARET ignores DENIS taking out the plate unwrapping the cellophane off it and placing it on a table, already laid ready for her to eat.

DENIS (CONT'D)

Well you really gave it to that quack didn't you, darling? Just like the old days! Hallucinations my eye!

DENIS picks up a piece of cucumber from her plate. She absently smacks at his hand.

DENIS (CONT'D)

How dare he?

DENIS smiles.

DENIS (CONT'D)
 But then you give us all the run
 around, don't you?

MARGARET looks at him, silently infuriated.

INT. DRAWING ROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. PRESENT. DUSK.

MARGARET pours herself a whiskey. DENIS looms close,
 serves a splash of soda.

DENIS
 I know you can hear me,
 sweetheart, so there's no use
 pretending you can't.

MARGARET turns, ignoring him.

MARGARET
 Enough. Denis, enough!

DENIS
 (saluting)
 Dismissed!

INT. DRAWING ROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. PRESENT. DUSK.

MARGARET sits reading DENIS' spy novel.

DENIS
 She does it in the end. Kills him-

MARGARET slams the book closed.

DENIS (CONT'D)
 I don't know why you're being so
 scratchy.

MARGARET's eyes dart to the clock.

DENIS (CONT'D)
 It's not as if you've got anyone
 else to talk to.

Shaking her head, MARGARET tries to block him out.

MARGARET (V.O.)
 When the Himalayan peasant meets
 the he-bear in his pride -

DENIS

You know, it's a marvel to me that you can still quote huge chunks of Kipling but try remembering the name of that woman who's just made you that godawful cold collation... No? Come on... you can do it... month of the year... one syllable... rhymes with moon ...

MARGARET

(sudden/like a lightbulb)

June.

MARGARET turns to DENIS, a quiet appalling victory.

DENIS

June! Bingo. Knew you'd get there in the end. "When the Himalayan peasant meets the he-bear in his pride, He shouts to scare the monster, who will often turn aside, but the she-bear thus accosted rends the peasant tooth and nail. For the female of the species is more deadly than the male..."

As he continues, MARGARET reaches for the remote, turns the television on. She moves onto the radio. Then the stereo. She moves on, talking to herself-

A gradual growing cacophony of sound-

INT. KITCHEN. CHESTER SQUARE. PRESENT. DUSK.

MARGARET flicks on mixers, radios, toasters-

INT. DRAWING ROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. PRESENT. DUSK.

The noise almost unbearable now-

MARGARET turns on a hi-fi, the TV now on-

MARGARET

If I can't hear you then I can't see you. And if I can't see you then you are not here.

MARGARET closes her eyes.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

And if you are not here, I am not going mad. I will not...I will not go mad.

She opens them and suddenly freezes on seeing an image of herself, bewildered and leaving Harley Street, caught on the TV-

BBC VOICEOVER

Baroness Thatcher made an apparently routine visit to her doctor today. Although rarely seen in public, Lady Thatcher, the longest serving Prime Minister of the twentieth century, remains a controversial figure.

MARGARET turns up the volume to full, trying to hear over the cacophony of noise the changing images on the TV illuminating her pale face.

JUNE

Margaret-

MARGARET barely sees her, eyes riveted to the TV.

BBC VOICE OVER

Almost lovingly dubbed by the Soviets The Iron Lady, she's also credited, with her friend Ronald Reagan, with a decisive role in the ending of the Cold War. Her supporters claim she transformed the British economy and reversed the country's post-war decline. Her detractors blame her savage public spending cuts and sweeping privatization of -

JUNE moves like a dervish through the house, muting the television and turning off the last of the appliances-

A gradual silence descends until-

MARGARET takes in the image of herself on the mute screen, standing bewildered on the steps of Harley Street.

MARGARET

(almost to self)
I don't recognize myself.

INT. BATHROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. PRESENT. NIGHT.

The shelf of a bathroom cabinet. Shaving brush. Razor. Medicaments. MARGARET begins to pull them all off the shelves.

DENIS (O.S.)

Am I out of the doghouse yet?

Then a pair of glasses. More gently, MARGARET'S hand reaches into the cupboard and takes the glasses in her hand.

INT. BEDROOM. HOUSE. CHESTER SQUARE. PRESENT. NIGHT.

MARGARET lies in bed, book in her lap, DENIS beside her reading the paper. She closes the book and pulls off her reading glasses.

MARGARET

They're unveiling that portrait of me at Number 10 next month. The invitation's on the mantelpiece. So there'll be Churchill, Lloyd George and me. Just the three of us.

SILENCE-

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I said I didn't want any big fuss but they insisted..

SILENCE-

Lovely little article in *The Telegraph...* *The Woman Who Changed the Face of History..*

SILENCE-

Voices from the past intrude -

FOOT VO

Less than two years ago, the Prime Minister quoted St. Francis and talked about bringing faith, hope and harmony to this country.

MARGARET suddenly reaches out a hand, her hand shaking-

MARGARET

Denis?

She turns in bed. Sudden panic, DENIS is gone-

A HECKLING CHAMBER RISING THROUGH-**INT. CHAMBERS. HOUSE OF COMMONS. 1980. DAY.**

A HECKLING chamber as MARGARET sits, facing LABOUR OUTRAGE, the labour leader, FOOT, grips his paper, mid speech-

FOOT

Can the Right Honourable Lady deny, that having brought about the highest level of unemployment since 1934-

MARGARET bides her time on the front bench, waiting her turn, surrounded by her CABINET MINISTERS including HOWE, PYM and HESELTINE-

FOOT (CONT'D)

The biggest fall in total output in steel and coal production in one year since 1931. And the biggest collapse in industrial production since 1921.

MARGARET remains seemingly calm and serene, and yet one hand quietly grips the bench, her wedding ring tapping against the wood nervously.

FOOT (CONT'D)

Can she also accept that her free market economics designed to create a growing middle class ensures that the rich get richer and the poor are irrelevant!

INT. CAR. STREETS. LONDON. 1980. DAY

A rising roar of voices -

PROTESTORS

Maggie Maggie Maggie! Out Out Out!
Maggie Maggie Maggie! Out Out Out!

MARGARET in her car driving through the blur of furious PROTESTORS.

PROTESTOR 1

You're supposed to be a mother!
You're not a mother, you're s
monster! You're a monster!

INT. DRAWING ROOM. DOWNING STREET. 1980. EVENING.

CLOSE UP on a button -

The STEADY IN and OUT of a needle pulling taut on a thread. MARGARET stands, swathed in a glittering long dinner dress, a SEAMSTRESS stitching a stray button on the front of the bodice on her dress.

Geoffrey Howe stands nearby in a dinner jacket.

HESELTINE

May we have a word, Prime
Minister?

A bank of MINISTERS, including HESELTINE, PYM, PRIOR, HOWE and GILMOUR, gather before her.

MARGARET

Yes, but in order to arrive at the palace on time, Geoffrey and I are will be walking out of that door in 15 minutes. As you can see -

HESELTINE

I know you're running late Margaret, but we have to address this situation in light of tomorrow's blistering press coverage. Blistering! The knives are out. Your draft budget's been leaked, Geoffrey, they are baying for our blood!

HOWE

Michael we can't possibly buckle at the first sign of difficulty.

The SCRATCH of PRIOR's hand on unkempt hair-

HESELTINE

No one is saying we have to buckle.

PRIOR

But is this really the time to make these spending cuts in the middle of one of the deepest recessions this country has ever experienced?

HESTLETINE

We need a plan of action, Margaret.

PYM

Absolutely. A strategy.

GILMOUR

We must be armed.

PRIOR

Agreed.

MARGARET stiffens, the needle momentarily hovering mid stitch as MARGARET shifts a little-

The SEAMSTRESS resumes sewing-

PRIOR (CONT'D)

There's a perception, Margaret rightly or wrongly, that we are now completely out of touch with the country.

The patronizing tone inflames her.

MARGARET

Really.

(beat)

How much is a pack of Lurpak?

PYM

Lurpak?

MARGARET

Butter, Francis.

(silence)

Forty two pence. Anchor butter is forty pence. Flora margarine, still the cheapest, is thirty eight pence. I can assure you I am not out of touch.

Another MINISTER - GILMOUR - whispers the words: "Grocer's Daughter" - as a put down. The men smirk.

MARGARET has caught the moment. A sudden flash of the pretty girls in the Grantham Street long ago, laughing at her.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

What - did you say?

GILMOUR makes a gesture.

GILMOUR

Nothing. Nothing, Prime Minister.

MARGARET is furious.

MARGARET

Don't try to hide you opinions.
Goodness me, I'd much rather you
were honest and straightforward
about them - instead of
continuously and damagingly
leaking them to the press. Well?

MOMENTARILY SILENT-

MARGARET's eyes travel around the room in waiting-

PYM

Well, people can't pay their
mortgages.

GILMOUR

The manufacturing industry is
practically on its knees.

PYM

Honest, hard-working, decent
people are losing their homes.
It's terribly shameful.

GILMOUR

The point is, Prime Minister, that
we must moderate the pace -

HESELTINE

- if we're even to have a hope of
winning the next election-

PYM

Quite right.

MARGARET

Ah. Worried about our careers, are
we?

They make noises - to the effect that nothing could be
further from the truth.

But MARGARET has their measure.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, if we don't cut
spending we will be bankrupt. Yes
the medicine is harsh but the
patient requires it in order to
live. Shall we withhold the
medicine? No! We are not wrong. We
did not seek election and win in
order to manage the decline of a
great nation.

(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)

The people of this country chose us because they believe we can restore the health of the British economy and we will do just that! Barring a failure of nerve.

The SNAP OF COTTON -

MARGARET looks at them in a cold fury...

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Anything else?

SILENCE-

MARGARET nods to the seamstress, dismissing her-

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Thank you. You saved the day once again, Crawfie, you're an angel.

MARGARET straightens her cuff, testing the button, as the meeting slowly disbands and the MINISTERS move away.

HOWE

You can't close down a discussion because it's not what you wish to hear.

MARGARET

I don't expect everyone just to sit there and agree with me. But what kind of leader am I if I don't try to get my own way - to do what I know to be right.

HOWE

Yes. But Margaret, one must be careful of testing one's colleagues' loyalty too far.

MARGARET glances up watching the MINISTERS disappearing, in whispered conversation, like conspirators.

(ARCHIVE FOOTAGE) Rioting in Brixton, burning cars, huge civil unrest -

TV JOURNALIST (V.O.)

We are now one split nation, with a huge gulf dividing the employed from the unemployed.

(ARCHIVE FOOTAGE) Protest marches, 'People's March for Jobs', 'No pit closures' -

UNION ACTIVIST (V.O.)

The Thatcher plan is to break the
Trade Union movement.

MARGARET (V.O.)

There must be closures of
uneconomic coal mines, we seek
only an efficient industry.

(ARCHIVE FOOTAGE) violent clashes between protesting
miners and police -

MINER'S WIFE (V.O.)

The miners are being starved back
to work, the need is desperate!

INT. CORRIDOR. HOUSE OF COMMONS. 1981. DAY.

MARGARET sweeping along an endless corridor, surrounded
by her cabinet, hard on her heels. HOWE, HESELTINE, PYM,
PRIOR and OTHERS. MARGARET talking, they hang on her
every word.

MARGARET (V.O.)

There are those who would say hold
back, there are those who would
make us retreat -

INT. CONFERENCE CENTRE BRIGHTON. 1980.

Margaret mid speech.

MARGARET

But we shall never give in to
them. We shall never waver, not
for a second, in our determination
to see this country prosper once
again.

The party faithful erupt in cheers, seconded by all
Margaret's courtiers on the platform. PYM, PRIOR,
HESELTINE, HOWE and above all DENIS, applauding as if
their lives depended on it.

INT. LADIES. HOUSE OF COMMONS. 1980. DAY.

MARGARET sits clutching the sink, a light sweat breaking
across her forehead. She looks up-

NEWS READER (V.O.)

A car bomb has exploded outside
Harrods department store, killing
six people and injuring 71.

NEWS READER 2 (V.O.)

Eleven soldiers died today when two bombs were detonated during military parades in Hyde Park and Regent's Park. Seven horses also died in the blasts.

INTERCUT (ARCHIVE FOOTAGE) bombed buildings, horses lying dead in the street, an IRA banner.

NEWS READER 3 (V.O.)

The IRA have claimed responsibility.

INT. BEDROOM. CHESTER SQUARE. LONDON. PRESENT. NIGHT.

MARGARET lost in restless sleep-

INTERCUT (ARCHIVE FOOTAGE) IRA graffiti scrawled on a wall, paramilitaries fire guns, sirens wail.

INT. CONFERENCE CENTRE BRIGHTON. 1980.

Margaret on the podium.

MARGARET

And now, it must be business as usual.

THE BRIGHTON GRAND HOTEL.

INT. SITTING ROOM. SUITE. GRAND HOTEL. 1984. NIGHT.

DENIS in pyjamas, brushes his teeth in the bathroom. He glances at MARGARET through the open door as she sits, still in evening dress, working on her speech.

DENIS

Come on love, get to bed. I don't know why you do this to yourself every year, it's a speech at conference, not the Magna Carta!

She looks up, distracted.

DENIS (CONT'D)

Time to call it a day, darling. It's ten to three, for God's sake.

MARGARET

I know, I'm coming DT. Nearly there -

BOOM!

An almighty explosion rips through the room; wood, glass, furniture splinters, curtains flay from the walls. The fall of plaster, devastating, the hotel room obliterated, reduced to a smoking, dusty rubble.

MARGARET stands ghostlike, covered in debris.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
(calling out)
Denis!

MARGARET searching through the haze of fallen plaster, covered with dust, slowly clearing to reveal-

MARGARET (CONT'D)
(more desperate)
Denis- there you are. Are you alright?

DENIS ghostlike, covered in dust, still in his pyjamas, holding up an obliterated pair of shoes.

DENIS
My shoes!

Beyond, the wall of the bathroom entirely blown away -
The CAW of gulls-

EXT. GRAND HOTEL. BRIGHTON. 1984. NIGHT.

Chaos outside the Grand Hotel in the aftermath of the bomb.

The WHIR of SIRENS-

DENIS and MARGARET sit in their car, looking out in silent shock at the devastated Grand hotel, reflected on the glass of the car windows.

MARGARET (V.O.)
That's when I thought I'd lost you.

A TELEPHONE RINGS CUTTING THROUGH FROM ANOTHER TIME...

INT. BEDROOM. HOUSE. CHESTER SQUARE. PRESENT. NIGHT.

MARGARET wakes with a start, confused and fumbles for the telephone by her bed-

MARGARET
(picking up phone)
Mark?... Hello darling... No, I'm fine... I'm very well...

MARGARET squints, fingers fumbling for DENIS' watch.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
How is... How's... Sarah?... And
the children..?

MARGARET sits up -

MARGARET (CONT'D)
...Oh... You can't... That's a
pity... I was hoping to see you...
No really darling... That's
fine... Of course... another
time... Lovely Darling... Can't
wait...Yes...

MARGARET suddenly relents, a flicker of sudden and urgent
need, caught in her eyes-

MARGARET (CONT'D)
(beat)
Mark?

Silence-

MARK gone. MARGARET hangs up, stares at-

I Whistle A Happy Tune from the King and I just audible-

INT. DRAWING ROOM.CHESTER SQUARE.PRESENT.NIGHT.

MARGARET stands in the doorway, a jaunty "I Whistle A
Happy Tune" seeping from the television.

MARGARET
That was Mark. Not able to come.

DENIS
(cutting in)
Boy's always going AWOL.

MARGARET
Well it costs him a great deal to
fly everyone up here.

DENIS
There you go, making excuses for
him. Now look where it's got you.

DENIS stands dressed in dinner jacket and bow tie as he
reads the back of "The King and I" DVD.

DENIS (CONT'D)
Did you know Yul Brynner was a
gypsy from Vladivostok?

MARGARET

Yes. He moved to Paris when he was fourteen. He played the King of Siam 4,625 times on the London and Broadway stages. What are you doing?

DENIS

(turning round
shaking a cocktail)
One likes to make an effort. A snifter?

MARGARET

You're dead, Denis.

DENIS

Ah. Well, if I'm dead... who are you talking to? Shall we dance ?

He takes Margaret in his arms. The music changes to 'Shall we Dance' from 'The King and I' as DENIS takes a confused MARGARET in his arms and begins an expansive waltz round the room. The room turns. YOUNG DENIS dancing with the YOUNG MARGARET. Now its OLD DENIS dancing with OLD MARGARET again. DENIS loses his footing, and MARGARET lurches towards the desk where her eyes fall on figurines of Falklands soldiers. She stares hard.

NEWS READER (V.O.)

The Falkland islands, the British Colony in the South Atlantic, has fallen. Argentina claims its marines went ashore this morning as a spearhead to capture key targets, including the capital, Port Stanley.

INT. STUDY. DOWNING STREET. LONDON. 1982. DAY.

MARGARET sits, composed, staring up at a phalanx of military men and her ministers.

MARGARET

Gentlemen, the Argentinian Junta - which is a fascist gang - has invaded our sovereign territory. This cannot be tolerated. May I make plain my negotiating position. I will not negotiate with criminals or thugs. The Falkland islands belong to Britain, and I want them back. Gentlemen, I need you to tell me today if that is possible.

ADMIRAL LEACH
Possible... just, Prime Minister.
We can have a Task Force ready to
sail in forty-eight hours.

MARGARET is visibly stunned.

MARGARET
Forty-eight hours?

ADMIRAL LEACH
But -

MARGARET
But?

ADMIRAL LEACH
We have a very narrow weather
window. We can't fight in winter
down there. Nobody can. If we are
going, we have to go now.

INT. STUDY. DOWNING STREET. LONDON. 1982. DAY.

MARGARET at her desk.

MARGARET
Why were the islands left without
any naval protection?

JOHN NOTT
In the last round of Defence cuts
we judged the risk of invasion to
be small.

MARGARET
Did we?

JOHN NOTT
And if you remember, Prime
Minister, you agreed that we
should reduce the naval presence
in the area to an absolute
minimum.

MARGARET taps her fingers against the map, with growing
irritation.

INT. CABINET. DOWNING STREET. DAY.

MARGARET sits alone.

INT CORRIDOR. . CORRIDOR. DOWNING STREET. LONDON. 1982. DAY

MARGARET is under attack.

HOWE

Margaret, the cost of sending 28,000 men and a hundred ships twelve thousand miles, almost to Argentina, will be absolutely crippling.

MARGARET

I don't think we should be worrying about money at this point, Geoffrey.

GEOFFREY HOWE

We can't afford to go to war.

INT. STUDY. LONDON. 1982. NIGHT.

MARGARET sits alone.

ADMIRAL LEACH (V.O.)

We have to go now.

MARGARET (V.O.)

The government has now decided that a large task force will sail, as soon as all preparations are complete.

INTERCUT (ARCHIVE FOOTAGE) the Task Force sets sail.

INT. DRAWING ROOM. DOWNING STREET. LONDON. 1982. DAY

MARGARET paces, deep in thought.

MP 1 (O.S.)

Prime Minister we do still have three weeks before our ships reach the islands.

MP 2 (O.S.)

All we're saying is that we shouldn't give up on trying to find a diplomatic solution.

INT. CORRIDOR. DOWNING STREET. LONDON. 1982. DAY.

A tea trolley and an American entourage surge down a Downing Street corridor.

