

LITTLE BOY

Written by

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Based on a true story

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EXT. HELICOPTER - MORNING

SUPER: "2007. The English Channel."

Two uniformed Air Force soldiers inside a helicopter. Far above the ocean.

One of them holds a metal cannister. He examines it.

SOLDIER #1
Greatest killer in history. In a jar.

The other soldier grunts.

SOLDIER #2
Weird request.

SOLDIER #1
I think he figured his tomb would be defaced. You know. Protestors.

SOLDIER #2
Why didn't he ask his family to do it?

SOLDIER #1
He did.

The other soldier nods, taps on the window.

SOLDIER #2
Here?

Soldier #1 shrugs. They look over the edge. The water below looks angry. He opens the cannister. It's full of ASHES.

SOLDIER #1
He said halfway between England and France.

SOLDIER #2
Close enough.

The first soldier grabs the cannister from him. Tilts it over the edge.

The ashes fly out. We follow them over the great British Sea.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. SPANISH STYLE BUILDING - WAITING ROOM - DAY

SUPER: "Colorado Springs Air Force Base, 1944"

A MAN sits in a spare, small waiting room. He's dressed in a crisp military uniform. A few medals on his chest. His eyes are bleary. This is LIEUTENANT PAUL TIBBETS (29).

There are two other SOLDIERS, also in uniform. One nods at Tibbets.

SOLDIER
(by way of greeting)
Dresden.

TIBBETS
Burma.

They look at the third soldier, who chews gum loudly.

SOLDIER #2
Morocco.

SOLDIER
Lucky bastard.

SOLDIER #2
Not really.

They lapse into silence.

SOLDIER
What the hell's the point of this?

TIBBETS
The point is it's mandatory.

BANG. CRACK!

All three soldiers, without missing a beat, dive for cover under the waiting room chairs. Soldier #2 flips a chair like a barricade. Tibbets, however, stands, ready for action. His hand goes to his belt, pulling a gun.

REVERSE TO SEE:

A terrified SECRETARY stands over a SHATTERED VASE.

SECRETARY
I'm so sorry.

A beat.

TIBBETS

No problem at all, Ma'am. Need any help cleaning that up?

INT. AIR FORCE BASE - PSYCHIATRIST OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Tibbets sits opposite DR. LAUREL EVANS (31).

LAUREL

Hallucinations?

TIBBETS

No, Ma'am.

LAUREL

Flashbacks?

Shakes his head no.

LAUREL (CONT'D)

Feel more jumpy than usual?

He hesitates, caught off-guard. Then...

TIBBETS

Can't say I do.

LAUREL

It's pretty commonplace in your field. We call it hyper-arousal.

TIBBETS

Never noticed anything like that, Ma'am.

LAUREL

Lieutenant, you've been in the field for two years and eight months. Are you telling me you've come out of all that completely unscathed?

TIBBETS

I guess I am.

Laurel closes her notebook, clearly accustomed to this.

LAUREL

You boys never say anything, do you?

TIBBETS

Sorry I can't be more helpful. But
I'd like to see my family. It's
been a while. So if you wouldn't
mind clearing me--

He slides a form towards her. Laurel sighs, picks up a pen.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)

(always polite)
Thanks.

EXT. AIR FORCE BASE - TIBBETS HOUSE - EVENING

Snow falling. Tibbets starts to open the door to the assigned family housing. His wife, LUCY TIBBETS (27), answers before he turns the key. She's unsentimental and outspoken.

They look at each other for a long, silent moment. She kisses him, then backs away.

LUCY

Please tell me you didn't forget.

Tibbets gestures to the bag in his right hand.

Lucy looks in. Sees a MODEL AIRPLANE in a box.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Seriously?

INT. TIBBETS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

MARY (6), Tibbets's daughter, kneels on the carpet examining a WRAPPED CARDBOARD BOX.

Tibbets and Lucy sit close together on the couch, watching.

MARY

What is it? A Barbie? Easy Bake
oven?

LUCY

Don't be too disappointed if it's
not--

TIBBETS

You're going to love it, Honey.

Lucy looks at him, doubtful.

MARY
Can I open it?

TIBBETS
Of course--

LUCY
No. It's not your birthday yet,
Mary. You can wait one more day.

INT. TIBBETS HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lucy and Mary watch Tibbets cook. Mary sits on the counter-top, captivated.

TIBBETS
It's rice vermicelli.

MARY
From Burma?

He nods, holds the dry noodles over the steaming broth.

TIBBETS
I'm going to drop these into a fish-based broth of onion, garlic, ginger and lemongrass.

He opens a plastic bag and pulls out an exotic-looking pinkish-purple bulb.

MARY
What's that?

TIBBETS
A flowering Banana blossom. An old woman in Burma taught me how to use it.

Then removes the outer layers of sepals, collecting the small delicate flowers one at a time.

MARY
They're really pretty.

Lucy smiles, amused.

LUCY
I remember when you wouldn't eat anything that wasn't covered in cream of mushroom soup.

TIBBETS
I like knowing something about the
culture I'm--

LUCY
-- invading.

He gives her a look.

TIBBETS
We didn't invade.

LUCY
They can't deploy you again, can
they?

Tibbets doesn't answer.

Lucy lifts Mary off the counter.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Go wash up for dinner.

Mary hesitates, fixated as her dad drops the flowers into the pot.

Lucy gently nudges her. When she's out of earshot...

LUCY (CONT'D)
You know, my new strategy is to
assume you're dead. Until you
aren't. Then I'm pleasantly
surprised.

Tibbets puts down the wooden spoon, kisses her. Deeply, fiercely, the way they didn't when they first saw each other. There are tears in her eyes.

INT. TIBBETS HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Naked, entangled in each other, Lucy watches as Tibbets drifts off to sleep.

LUCY
Paul?

He's out.

As we close in on his face, we hear SOUNDS OF WAR rising, playing out in his embattled brain. SHOTS FIRED, SIRENS BLARING. Then the sound of a PLANE, screeching against the runway.

INT. TIBBETS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Now the same plane SOUNDS, but made by a child.

Tibbets, wearing a robe, watches Mary bring her toy plane in for a landing.

TIBBETS
Careful now. Back wheels first.

She takes this advice very seriously, looking up for guidance.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)
Now dump the flaps. There you go.
Easy.

Lucy enters pulling her robe around her, sees Mary soaring around the room, clearly enthralled by her new gift.

They hear a loud KNOCK. Both know what it means.

EXT. BASE - FAMILY APARTMENT - FRONT STEPS

A young SOLDIER stands nervously at the door. Lucy answers.

SOLDIER
Sorry to bother you on Christmas
Day, Ma'am. I'm looking for
Lieutenant--

LUCY
He's still in Burma.

She slams the door. The soldier reacts, startled.

Moments later, the door opens again. Tibbets stands there, apologetic.

TIBBETS
What can I do for you?

The Soldier hesitates, then takes out a BLINDFOLD.

SOLDIER
This is a bit unusual.

INT. BASE - GROVES'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Tibbets, now blind-folded, sits alone in a crowded office.

The door bangs open. GENERAL LESLIE GROVES (40s), overweight, garrulous and a little ridiculous without meaning to be.

GROVES
Tibbets?

Tibbets looks in the direction of the sound. Stands to attention and salutes.

TIBBETS
Yes, Sir.

GROVES
Well? Are you ready?

TIBBETS
Yes, Sir.

GROVES
You haven't asked me what you should be ready for.

TIBBETS
I'm ready for anything, Sir.

GROVES
Sit down.

He does.

GROVES (CONT'D)
You're 29 years old.

TIBBETS
I am, Sir.

GROVES
You look twelve.

TIBBETS
If you say so, Sir.

GROVES
They say you're the best pilot in the history of the Air Force. Is that true?

TIBBETS
I wouldn't say that, Sir.

GROVES
You led the first B17 raid across the English Channel.
(MORE)

GROVES (CONT'D)
And Operation TORCH. You were Ike's
personal pilot.

TIBBETS
Yes, Sir.

GROVES
Then tell me you're the best.

TIBBETS
I don't--

Groves walks around his desk, leans in close to Tibbets.

GROVES
Say it. That's a direct order.

Modesty is extremely difficult for Tibbets.

TIBBETS
I'm... the best, Sir.

Groves, with a quick gesture, removes the blindfold. Tibbets blinks, looking at him.

GROVES
General Leslie Groves. If you see
me again, you'll pretend you know
me from anything but this.

TIBBETS
Of course, Sir.

A beat.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)
What is this?

GROVES
The most important mission in
military history. You're going to
drop a bomb and end this fucking
war. What do you have to say about
that?

Tibbets reels. Groves keeps going, oblivious.

TIBBETS
Did you say, end the war, Sir?

GROVES
Oh yeah.

Tibbets shakes his head. He didn't know that was possible.

GROVES (CONT'D)
I'm guessing you want to know
something about this new bomb?

TIBBETS
Whatever I should know, Sir.

GROVES
Well, you can't know anything. For
now.

TIBBETS
Of course, Sir.

GROVES
Report to the hangar at 0600. Pack
for several months. We've been
watching you, Colonel. You're an
extremely boring man.

TIBBETS
I'm sorry, General. Did you say
Colonel?

GROVES
Didn't I mention we're making you
Colonel?

Tibbets reacts.

TIBBETS
I'm honored, Sir.

GROVES
Any questions?

TIBBETS
May I bring my family?

GROVES
You're not going to the Florida
Keys, Tibbets. It's not a family
vacation.

Groves stands up, indicating the interview is over. Tibbets does the same. They salute each other.

GROVES (CONT'D)
You don't have to do this, you
know. I can put you on reserve.
You've done more time abroad than
almost any soldier in the Air
Force.

(beat)
(MORE)

GROVES (CONT'D)
Mostly because you haven't died
yet.

Tibbets barely hesitates, leans forward.

TIBBETS
I'd like to finish what I started.
Kill the bastards who are killing
our men.
(beat)
I'm all in, Sir.

EXT. BASE - FAMILY APARTMENT BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Tibbets and Lucy sit on the porch. They watch Mary, bundled in a winter coat, playing in the snow.

Lucy's clearly been crying, but now she's just angry.

LUCY
Anyone else could do it.

TIBBETS
Not as well.

She shakes her head.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)
I wasn't supposed to tell you
anything.

She looks at him, then goes inside. Tibbets stares up at the white snow, still falling. Mary waves at him, laughing, oblivious. He waves back.

INT. JAPANESE FAMILY HOUSE - BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Halfway across the world, snowflakes drift past a wooden window. It's early morning in Tokyo.

MARQUIS KIDO (40s), lies next to his wife, NATSUKO GENTARO (30s). His eyes are wide open. She's asleep.

She wakes with a start, looks at him. Reaches out her hand and gently touches his cheek.

(Dialogue and signage in Japanese with subtitles).

NATSUKO
Go back to sleep.

He gets out of bed instead.

INT. JAPANESE FAMILY HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MORNING

Kido, Natsuko and their son, AKIRA (7) kneel at a low dining table. Natsuko jabs one of the untouched rice balls on Akira's plate.

NATSUKO

They say if you eat rice balls with scallions you won't get bombed. But you have to tell someone for it to work.

KIDO

That's ridiculous.

NATSUKO

I know.

(beat)

I told all my friends.

KIDO

We're safe, Natsuko.

He gets up to go. Akira yanks on his mother's sleeve, pointing to his full mouth.

AKIRA

I'm eating them!

NATSUKO

Good. Now tell someone.

AKIRA

I told Takeshi.

He points to a shoebox with air holes. Inside is a pet turtle.

NATSUKO

Good. Now pray together.

INT. JAPANESE FAMILY HOUSE - SHRINE - MOMENTS LATER

The family, including the pet turtle, prays in front of a Shinto shrine.

Kido tries to get up again, but his wife, eyes still closed, pulls him back down. Sighing, he kneels again.

INT. CAR - MOVING - MORNING

Kido and Akira drive in a compact Japanese car through the city of Tokyo, devastated by a massive fire-bombing.

They pass a sign that reads: FORGET SELF! ALL OUT FOR YOUR COUNTRY!

Above the sign is a PORTRAIT of EMPEROR HIROHITO.

AKIRA

Does he really never say anything?

KIDO

Sometimes he does.

AKIRA

Why doesn't he talk more?

KIDO

You know the answer, Akira. He's divine. Above men.

AKIRA

Don't you ever wonder what he's thinking?

(beat)

I wonder what Takeshi's thinking all the time.

KIDO

He's not thinking anything, Akira. He's a turtle.

Kido slows down. Lets Akira off at a local school.

Watches as he joins the other children in the yard, set up at stations in the style of a factory. They are helping with the assembly of WAR TIME EQUIPMENT.

School ended years ago.

INT. CAR - MOVING - DAY

Now Kido sits in the back of a luxurious black sedan.

Opposite him, on a silver dais, is EMPEROR HIROHITO (43). A small, intense looking man in full military regalia.

And he almost never speaks.

EXT. TOKYO - MILITARY COMPOUND - DAY

Outside, HUNDREDS of TROOPS BOW to the passing car as they move slowly through the front gate of the imperial compound.

INT. TOKYO - MILITARY COMPOUND HANGAR - DAY

Kido and the Emperor stand next to ADMIRAL YANAMI (40s), the commander of the air force. He holds a riding crop.

They stand on a balcony raised above a hangar full of sharp, black planes. Below them, a crowd of YOUNG MEN wearing jackets with Rising Sun symbols and leather helmets, bow to their emperor.

Yanami uses a crop to gesture to the men.

YANAMI

These are the brave men who give
their lives for our glorious
country! They ram their planes into
enemy ships, committing suicide in
the honorable name of the Empire!

An ATTRACTIVE WOMAN weaves through the assembly of pilots, offering tumblers of SAKE. They down them quickly.

YANAMI (CONT'D)

Who will fly today to destroy the
USS Indianapolis?

The men shout over each other to volunteer. Kido studies their faces. Sees fear they pretend isn't there.

YOUNG MAN

Allow me! Please, Your Majesty.

Hirohito says nothing. But Yanami gestures, and a SOLDIER leads the young man to the cockpit of a fighter jet.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

Banzai! Banzai! Banzai!

The other young men shout the same.

The glass lid of the cockpit is lowered over the chosen man. An ENGINEER begins to drill the lid closed.

Kido looks at Yanami, questioning.

YANAMI

In case he changes his mind.

INT. CAR - MOVING - DAY

Kido and the Emperor exit the compound.

KIDO
Your Majesty.

The emperor looks up.

KIDO (CONT'D)
They say Germany will declare
defeat soon.

A long beat. It's not clear if the Emperor has accepted this reality.

KIDO (CONT'D)
Have you given any thought to a
negotiated peace?

The Emperor is quiet, his expression inscrutable.

Then he speaks, his voice is surprisingly high-pitched.

EMPEROR
They look like birds.

Kido follows his gaze. Outside the window, a thick black flock of planes rises into the sky.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. TIBBETS HOUSE - HALLWAY - MORNING

Break of dawn. Tibbets, lugging a suitcase, pauses to look into Mary's bedroom.

She's sleeping with her arms around the toy plane.

INT. MILITARY PLANE - MOVING - MORNING

Groves and Tibbets are squeezed into the "jump" -- a makeshift wooden plank directly behind the pilot and copilot. The plane rattles from turbulence.

Tibbets suddenly unbuckles his seat belt, unable to stop himself. Leans forward and taps the pilot on the shoulder.

TIBBETS
Go easy on engine two for a second.
You'll ride this out a little
smoother.

As he returns to his seat, Groves studies him. Tibbets looks out the window. Sees nothing but desert.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)
Where are we?

Groves doesn't reply. The ride stabilizes.

EXT. LOS ALAMOS - AFTERNOON

A JEEP is ushered through the triple layer of barbed-wire security at the Los Alamos compound.

A large sign reads: WHAT YOU HEAR HERE, WHAT YOU SEE HERE, WHEN YOU LEAVE HERE, LET IT STAY HERE.

EXT. LOS ALAMOS - OPPENHEIMER'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Groves and Tibbets stand outside a small, Adobe-style bungalow. Groves leans on the buzzer.

GROVES
I'm warning you now, he's a weirdo.
I mean, reads Sanskrit poetry, shit like that. But obviously a genius.
But weird. Really fucking weird.

Suddenly the door opens, and standing in front of them is ROBERT OPPENHEIMER (30s). A long, skinny man with a bright, boyish face. He wears a suit with a flower through the lapel. He's smoking a cigarette and drinking a martini. Something he does constantly.

GROVES (CONT'D)
Colonel Tibbets. Meet Robert Oppenheimer. Chief Scientist.

Tibbets reaches out his hand, but Oppenheimer doesn't have one to spare.

INT. OPPENHEIMER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Groves and Tibbets sit across from Oppenheimer, who is smiling for no apparent reason. Gesturing to his drink--

OPPENHEIMER
Anything for you boys?

Tibbets shakes his head.

GROVES
The usual.

Oppenheimer goes to the sidebar and pours whiskey into a glass. A hefty dose. Groves gestures with his hand, *keep going.*

OPPENHEIMER
(re: Tibbets)
What does he know?

GROVES
Practically nothing.

OPPENHEIMER
And what would you like him to know?

GROVES
Everything.

Oppenheimer raises an eyebrow.

OPPENHEIMER
Everything?

Groves nods.

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
Have you heard of atomic energy,
Colonel Tibbets?

TIBBETS
No, Sir.

Groves, restless and bored already, takes a sizable swig from his drink. Wanders around the room, opening cabinet drawers.

OPPENHEIMER
You know about matter and antimatter?

Tibbets shakes his head. Oppenheimer sighs dramatically.

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
Paul - may I call you that? The universe was born of annihilation and energy, destruction and creation, fire and water, all mixed together. The Hindus know that, of course. Brahma creates, Vishnu preserves. And what's left?

Tibbets just stares at him.

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
It's not a trick question, Paul.

Groves is pulling hard on a closed cabinet door.

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
The chocolates are in the drawer
above. Top right.

Groves grunts, pulls open the indicated drawer. Finds the chocolates.

GROVES
Just want one.

He takes three.

OPPENHEIMER
Shiva is left. Shiva destroys. It's
the Holy Trinity--

GROVES
Jesus Christ, Oppie.
(to Tibbets)
The bomb is equivalent to 20,000
tons of TNT. As if 2,000 planes
dropped max loads at the same time.
Take every bomb you've ever
dropped, add them up -- and it's
still less than what this bomb can
do.

Tibbets looks at them, stunned.

GROVES (CONT'D)
What are you calling it now?

OPPENHEIMER
The gadget.

GROVES
It's a stupid fucking name but a
really powerful bomb, Tibbets. And
we're going to blow up a whole
lotta Japs with it.

Oppenheimer exhales smoke.

OPPENHEIMER
It's not a stupid name.

GROVES
You gotta quit smoking, Oppie, it's
a filthy habit.

His mouth is full of chocolate.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - CRITICAL MASS FACILITY - AFTERNOON

Groves, Tibbets and Oppenheimer look through a window at a workshop.

A scientist, LOUIS SLOTIN (20s), uses a screwdriver to manipulate a small metal hemisphere.

OPPENHEIMER

That's Slotin. One of our best physicists. He's testing the critical mass. Which requires bringing the two cores as close as possible without provoking a reaction. If that screwdriver slips... they call it twisting the dragon's tail.

Slotin gives them a thumbs up through the glass with his free hand. Groves grunts.

GROVES

I gotta piss.

As he wanders off, Oppenheimer suddenly turns to Tibbets.

OPPENHEIMER

His first choice chickened out.

(beat)

Good chance you will too after hearing what I'm about to say.

TIBBETS

Maybe it's better left unsaid, Sir.

Ignoring him--

OPPENHEIMER

If it goes off as planned, you and your crew will likely be incinerated in a massive eight mile blast that will extend all the way to the earth's crust. Unless you fly away very, very fast. Which is, as far as I can tell, close to impossible. You're going to want to think about all that.

TIBBETS

I've dropped a lot of bombs, Doctor Oppenheimer. I've found thinking doesn't help much.

Oppenheimer leans in, intense, eyes a little wild.

OPPENHEIMER

My cat wandered into the lab last month. His jaw bone turned to mush. His little tongue swelled. His hair fell out in patches. This isn't just another bomb, Colonel Tibbets. This one kills slowly. It's the embodiment of evil--

TIBBETS

That's more than I need to know.

His voice is firm. Oppenheimer looks surprised.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)

I fought the Japs. You know they dice American prisoners alive? Cut open their guts. Slowly, carefully, remove the organs, one by one. Guys are screaming while they do it.

OPPENHEIMER

That's disgusting.

TIBBETS

Yes, it is.

Groves bangs the bathroom door open, still pulling up his pants.

GROVES

Is he boring you, Tibbets?

TIBBETS

Not at all, General.

He looks warily between them.

GROVES

Stop talking about your damn kitty cat, Oppie.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - PLANE HANGAR - MORNING

Groves and Tibbets stand in front of a set of huge shiny black wheels.

GROVES
You know what this is?

Tibbets takes in the sight of the MASSIVE FOUR ENGINE PLANE.

TIBBETS
A B29?

GROVES
The super fortress. Biggest plane
in the world.

TIBBETS
I thought these weren't ready yet.
Accidents in testing.

GROVES
Yeah, yeah, nineteen people died, I
know.

TIBBETS
Isn't there another--

GROVES
It's the only plane big enough to
fit the gadget.

He gestures toward it.

GROVES (CONT'D)
It's yours. Two others on the way.

Tibbets runs his hands along the nose, then climbs the ladder. The plane is the size of half a football field.

GROVES (CONT'D)
Factory's gonna send a trainer. If
you're nervous.

Tibbets steps inside. Pokes his head up through the cockpit.

TIBBETS
Sir? Can I borrow this?

GROVES
You got some girl you wanna
impress?

TIBBETS
My daughter, Sir. I want to go get
my family and bring them back here.

Groves frowns.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)
I insist, Sir. Or you'll have to
find someone else.

Groves studies him.

INT. PLANE - MOVING - NIGHT

A terrified Lucy, holding her daughter, sits on the "jump" behind the pilot seat.

Tibbets pilots, grinning, and puffing on a pipe (he always smokes when he flies). An easy-going copilot, ROBERT LEWIS (29), sits next to him.

TIBBETS
(shouting)
Which way?

Mary squeals with pleasure.

MARY
Right!

Tibbets banks the plane right. Lucy and Mary slide to the other end of the plank.

LUCY
Paul! Please--

MARY
Left!

The plane banks left. She whoops, hollering, as they slide again. The copilot grins.

Tibbets looks out the window. It's the first time he's looked completely comfortable and at home. This is where he belongs.

The desert lights of Los Alamos wink in the distance. Their new home.

INT. TOKYO - IMPERIAL WAR ROOM - DAY

In a basement dining room -- Kido stands at the head of a table of SIX MEN.

The table is covered with brocade. Behind Kido is a paper-thin gold screen. In front of the screen, a silver dais.

The Emperor enters. Sits on the dais, facing south. The men bow deeply, then sit with their hands on their knees.

They do not look at the Emperor, who listens to the proceedings with a detached expression. Kido at his side.

KIDO

The Emperor wishes for Admiral Yanami to review his plans.

ADMIRAL YANAMI opens a scroll, begins to read.

YANAMI

After the slight misfortune of Iwo Jima, we are preparing for the barbarian invasion of the Emperor's homeland. The Americans will land at Kyushu in a few months. Where they will meet Operation Decision. Every man and woman age 15 to 60 will fight. All of Japan.

Kido listens to these insane plans, barely able to conceal his distaste.

KIDO

And what will they use as weapons?
You know the stock is depleted.

Yanami is irritated by the question.

YANAMI

Bamboo sticks cut into spears. Bow and arrow. Whatever they can find.

KIDO

Against American firearms. And how long will we fight?

YANAMI

Until the Americans surrender. Or we're all dead.

KIDO

Our people are starving. There is no rice. We have 25 carriers. They have 100. The merchant fleet has declined by five million tons. Japan cannot defeat America.

Yanami leans in. The other admirals watch, sensing the tension. None dare to say anything. Even if they agree.

YANAMI

I find your lack of faith disturbing, Kido.

KIDO
I'm the appointed voice of the
Emperor.

YANAMI
Does anyone else believe these are
the words of the Emperor?

The other admirals remain silent. They glance at the emperor, who makes no effort to settle the argument.

Yanami stands, defiant. Places a military order in front of the Emperor.

The emperor, hesitating, pours wax at the bottom of the page. Then stamps his SEAL. Still silent.

Yanami looks at Kido with satisfaction.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - AIR HANGAR - MORNING

Tibbets stands in the shadow of the massive B29. In front of him, a group of SEVEN SOLDIERS.

As he calls out names from a clipboard, the corresponding soldier steps forward.

TIBBETS
Ferebee, bombardier. Van Kirk,
navigator. Beser, radar. Parsons,
ordnance. Caron, tail gunner.
Eatherly, pilot. Lewis, pilot.

A beat.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)
You have the rest of the day off.

EATHERLY
To do what? We're not allowed to
leave the base.

CLAUDE EATHERLY (22) is tall, handsome, rakish with a lantern jaw. Breezy confidence.

TIBBETS
No, you're not.

EATHERLY
Not even on weekends.

TIBBETS
Never.

EATHERLY

So, what you're saying is, no
girls.

TIBBETS

This isn't summer camp, Lieutenant.

JACOB BESER (23), short, wiry, intense.

BESER

What is it, Colonel? I'm pulled out
of Nebraska right as the rest of
the boys deploy to the Pacific.
Nobody tells me anything.

TIBBETS

You were each selected for your
talents. You're the best of the
best.

EATHERLY

We already know that.

TIBBETS

The rest is classified.

The men look at each other.

PARSONS

You ever commanded a troop before?

WILLIAM PARSONS (43) is a Navy officer. A cool-headed bald
man.

TIBBETS

I'm a quick study.

PARSONS

What are you, like a decade younger
than me?

TIBBETS

Practice tomorrow at zero six
hundred.

PARSONS

Practice for what?

Tibbets looks up at their confused faces.

TIBBETS

Don't worry about what we're doing,
boys. Just worry about doing it
well.

He tucks the clipboard under his arm, walks off.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - DORMITORY - DAY

Eatherly, toting a large duffel bag, slams the door open, steps into a tiny, cramped dormitory. Through the back window, he sees a SECRET SERVICE MAN standing guard, arms folded.

He opens the window.

EATHERLY
Hey there.

The secret service man does not reply.

EATHERLY (CONT'D)
You must be bored out of your
fucking mind.

Nothing. He plops down on a nearby bed.

EATHERLY (CONT'D)
You gonna watch me jack off?

EXT. LOS ALAMOS - TIBBETS HOUSE - SAME TIME

A simple one-story bungalow with a front porch.

Lucy sips tea with a few Army wives seated around her. They are all looking at the BARBED WIRE FENCE that separates family housing from the internal compound.

WIFE #1
I heard Oppenheimer's having an
affair--

WIFE #2
Well, I heard his wife's breath
always smells like liquor--

WIFE #1
She's the only wife they let behind
the fence.

The other wives murmur at this.

LUCY
What the hell is actually going on
over here? Does anybody know?

They fall silent. Look at each other.

WIFE #3

They're planning a Winter Ball. For
late January.

WIFE #2

I heard they're bringing in the
Tommy Dorsey band.

WIFE #3

I love to dance.

Lucy rolls her eyes.

INT. HANGAR - B29 PLANE - MORNING

The men climb into the B29, exploring the cramped interior.

Beser and Eatherly enter the cockpit -- stop when they see a WOMAN sitting in the pilot's seat. This is DORA DAUGHERTY (27). Fierce, intelligent, with untamed dark hair.

DORA

Strap in, boys. Are you familiar
with flying by instruments?

EATHERLY

Who the hell are you?

Tibbets enters.

TIBBETS

Dora's an expert on B29s. Sent by
the Boeing factory. Part of the
Woman Airforce Service Pilots.

Eatherly calmly, confidently turns on various monitors.

EATHERLY

With all due respect, Dora, I don't
need a girl to tell me how to fly a
plane.

TIBBETS

Dora trained with the Wright
Brothers--

DORA

(to Tibbets)

Don't.

(to Eatherly)

You in or out, Sergeant? Because
this beast is taking off either
way.

INT. FIRST B29 PLANE - LATER

Later. Tibbets and copilot Lewis sit in the cockpit of a B29 as it flies several thousand feet above ground.

TIBBETS
(into headset)
The goal is to be eight miles away
43 seconds after dropping the load.

INT. SECOND B29 PLANE - DAY

Eatherly and Dora sit at the controls of a second B29, also racing above the clouds.

TIBBETS'S VOICE (O.S.)
Drop the target at AP. Then turn
155 degrees. And fly. Fast.

EATHERLY
155 degrees?

The radio crackles, but there's no answer.

DORA
Don't choke the throttle--

EATHERLY
(irritable)
I know.

Eatherly looks behind him.

EATHERLY (CONT'D)
(shouting)
Prepare the pumpkin!

INT. SECOND B29 PLANE - MIDSECTION - DAY

TOM FEREBEE (26), a notoriously accurate bombardier, and Parsons examine a giant metal sphere painted orange. It weighs 10,000 pounds.

FEREBEE
What the fuck is it?

PARSONS
Just a dummy.

FEREBEE
I know that. What the fuck is it
supposed to be?

He shrugs, unhooks the "bomb" from a release catch swinging from the wall.

INT. FIRST B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - DAY

Tibbets and Lewis look out their windows at a small pristine lake miles below them. Target practice.

TIBBETS
Dropping pumpkin one.

EXT. FIRST B29 PLANE - DAY

The bomb bay doors fly open and a metal orange ball drops out, plummeting toward the still water.

Tibbets maneuvers the plane into a hairpin turn. The massive aircraft creaks and lumbers, struggling with the tight angle.

Then the plane guns forward, trying to get away from the bomb as fast as possible.

INT. SECOND B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - DAY

Eatherly watches the first plane drop its load with a critical eye.

EATHERLY
He's never going to make eight miles.

EXT. FIRST B29 PLANE - DAY

Tibbets's plane races away from the pumpkin as Eatherly's plane waits, ready.

LEWIS
Detonation would happen... now!

Tibbets examines a gauge monitor.

TIBBETS
We made it 3 miles.
(low)
We just got incinerated.

LEWIS
What?

TIBBETS
Nothing.

INT. SECOND B29 PLANE - DAY

Eatherly laughs, buoyed by Tibbets's defeat.

EATHERLY
My turn!

TIBBETS'S VOICE (O.S.)
Take it easy, Eatherly.

EATHERLY
Not a chance.

DORA
I wouldn't--

EATHERLY
Here's how we're going to do this.
You're going to shut your pretty
little mouth and I'm going to fly
this fucking plane. Really fast.

He guns the throttle.

EATHERLY (CONT'D)
Release!

EXT. SECOND B29 PLANE - DAY

Eatherly's plane drops his pumpkin. Then he takes the 155-degree turn quickly.

So quickly that the plane CAPSIZEZ IN AIR.

INT. SECOND B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - DAY

CHAOS. Eatherly and Dora hang upside down by straps. The monitors light up.

Eatherly desperately hits switches, pulls back on the throttle.

He's panicking, but trying not to show it. He slams the radio with his fist.

INT. FIRST B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - SAME TIME

Tibbets watches calmly as Eatherly's plane flies belly up.

The radio crackles frantically.

LEWIS

I think he's trying to signal us--

TIBBETS

Let him figure it out.

Lewis reacts, surprised.

INT. SECOND B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - SAME TIME

Eatherly, wild-eyed, looks at Dora, who looks back at him, relaxed.

DORA

I'm keeping my pretty mouth shut.

EXT. SECOND B29 PLANE - DAY

Slowly the plane begins to right itself. It wavers, wobbly in the air.

INT. SECOND B29 - COCKPIT - DAY

Eatherly breathes a sigh of relief.

EATHERLY

(shaken)

There we go. There we go. I got this. Scared you didn't I?

Then without warning, it NOSE DIVES, heading into what pilots call a "graveyard spiral."

Eatherly slams on instruments and switches, pulls on the toggle, but nothing works. He looks over at Dora, who casually checks her nails.

EATHERLY (CONT'D)

Shit! Where is the RPM gauge?

Still nothing from Dora. He slams the wheel, his voice climbing several octaves as he SCREAMS. He looks at her. Helpless.

She smiles, shouting over the screaming monitors--

DORA
BEG FOR IT.

He grimaces, furious.

EATHERLY
HELP. ME.

Dora, almost bored, puts her hand over his and guides it to the throttle. With her other hand, she rapidly flicks several switches. The plane begins to right itself.

Eatherly watches, humiliated.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - PLANE HANGAR - LATER

The two B29s stand side by side. A little worse for wear but safely back on ground.

The crew, including Dora, stands in front of them. Eatherly paces back and forth, enraged.

EATHERLY
Those planes are fucking coffins.

Tibbets says nothing. He's studying the nose of the plane.

EATHERLY (CONT'D)
And we need a commander who knows
what the fuck he's doing.

Tibbets isn't listening.

TIBBETS
Imbalance comes from the nose. It's
off-kilter. We should get that
fixed.

Eatherly stops pacing in front of Tibbets, furious.

EATHERLY
Are you going to reply, Colonel?

Tibbets eyes him steadily. His voice kind but firm.

TIBBETS
I know you're humiliated, Claude.
But defeat makes you stronger. My
first big mission, I nearly threw
Eisenhower out the window. Banked
too sharp.
(beat)
Dora will work with you.

DORA
Happy to help.

Eatherly looks at her, then back at Tibbets, enraged.

EATHERLY
Are you out of your fucking--

TIBBETS
And don't curse around me.

Eatherly and the men look at him, astonished. Dora stifles a chuckle.

EXT. LOS ALAMOS - HANGAR - NIGHT

Tibbets sits cross-legged in front of the planes, studying them. Still trying to figure something out.

Dora approaches.

Without looking away--

TIBBETS
It takes a B29 two minutes to fly eight miles, but the bomb takes only 43 seconds to travel 29,000 feet. The shock wave takes 40 seconds to travel eight miles.

DORA
We'd have to reach eight miles in one minute and 23 seconds. In a plane the size of a house.

They both sigh together.

TIBBETS
How'd you get so good?

She looks at him, surprised.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)
I want you on this mission.

DORA
Right. We're not even allowed to put on the uniform.

TIBBETS
I'll handle it.

He gets up abruptly, walks away. Off Dora, smiling.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - TIBBETS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tibbets, smoking his pipe, reads the newspaper. Mary sits at his feet.

MARY

Read to me, Daddy.

TIBBETS

Alright. Let's see what we have here.

He flips past various reports of the Pacific and German war theaters. "10,000 DEAD IN THE PACIFIC THIS MONTH."

Lucy enters with cups of hot chocolate, hands one to Mary.

LUCY

Tibbets.

He looks up. She hands him the other cup.

LUCY (CONT'D)

This place is crawling with people who don't look like soldiers.

TIBBETS

Support staff.

LUCY

There's a lot of them.

He doesn't respond. Keeps turning pages.

TIBBETS

Only way to survive this war is to keep your head down, Lucy.

LUCY

I'm sure that's what they tell you.

TIBBETS

It's what works.

LUCY

Not in this house. I'm not one of your soldiers. It's not how I survive.

Tibbets looks up at her.

TIBBETS

Alright, Lucy.

Then flips past another miserable report on deaths in Morocco -- lands on a Peanuts comic strip.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)
Okay, here we go, Pumpkin.

Mary sits up, eager. Lucy walks out.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - TIBBETS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Middle of the night. Lucy wakes up, looks at Tibbets. He's curled up in the fetal position, soaked in sweat.

She sighs, knowing what's going on inside his head.

EXT. BURMESE SKY - FLASHBACK - DAY

Suddenly we're soaring above the Burmese jungle -- Tibbets and his CO-PILOT in the cockpit of a small fighter plane. They're CHEERING themselves hoarse -- evidently on the heels of some victory. It's chaotic, confused, jubilant...

Until BLOOD SPLATTERS across the instruments -- the copilot falls forward, his head smashing against the monitors, a gaping gunshot wound in the back of his head.

Above them, a Japanese plane, black-and-yellow, soars within eyesight.

Behind the controls, a JAPANESE PILOT screams. Focusing his gun on Tibbets now, their gazes locked. He's about to shoot...

EXT. LOS ALAMOS - MORNING

CLOSE ON the picture of a JAPANESE SOLDIER, his cartoonish face twisted in fury -- the expression a close match to the flashback.

WIDEN TO SEE it's an American propaganda poster, nearly a story tall, being plastered on the building opposite Tibbets's house.

The caption: "WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT? STAY ON THE JOB UNTIL EVERY MURDERING JAP IS WIPED OUT!"

INT. LOS ALAMOS - TIBBETS KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Mary sits at the table, watching the men put up the poster. She's drawing her own little replica on a piece of paper.

Tibbets stands by the window, eating an APPLE, looking at the poster too.

Mary turns back to her father. Points at him.

MARY
What are you going to do about it?

INT. LOS ALAMOS - PLANE HANGAR - MORNING

Tibbets, in shirtsleeves (normally wears full uniform), RIPS OUT GUNS from the innards of the B29 plane and throws them, with a clatter, onto the concrete.

The men and Dora watch, astonished.

TIBBETS
I'm tossing out the armaments next.
The lighter we are, the faster we
go. This could get us to eight
miles.

EATHERLY
With no guns.

TIBBETS
Anti-aircraft can't reach us at
30,000 feet.

EATHERLY
But interceptors can.

Tibbets shrugs.

EATHERLY (CONT'D)
We'll be chewed up by enemy fire.

Tibbets stops to look at him, then at Dora.

TIBBETS
We have no choice.

EATHERLY
Yeah well, I do.

He turns and leaves. The men look warily at Tibbets, who doesn't stop him. Just keeps pulling out guns.

Dora looks at the men, then joins Tibbets.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - MAIL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Tibbets watches as Groves reads "outgoing" mail from the men.

GROVES

Van Kirk's wife is pregnant. And he
doesn't sound too happy about it.
'We will discuss when I return.'

TIBBETS

Oh.

GROVES

Mention it to him the next time you
see him.

TIBBETS

Why?

GROVES

So he knows we know.

Groves smiles, then RIPS up the letter and throws it in the trash. Hands an envelope to Tibbets.

GROVES (CONT'D)

Open it.

Tibbets takes it, stalls by reading the address on the outside.

Groves pulls out another letter, reads...

GROVES (CONT'D)

I think Eatherly has emotional
problems. Maybe we should cut him.

Tibbets considers this, then slowly shakes his head.

TIBBETS

He's a good pilot. He just needs
time.

GROVES

His letters talk about flashbacks
to Dresden. Wakes up sweating. Shit
like that.

He shakes his head, laughing.

GROVES (CONT'D)

Listen to this.

(in a little girl's voice)

(MORE)

GROVES (CONT'D)
*I'm sick and tired of being
expected to do exactly as I'm told.
Because usually it means dying.
We're going on a suicide mission.
Fine. I just want to know. Tibbets
thinks we're his pawns. But the
truth is, he's a pawn too.*

Groves snorts.

GROVES (CONT'D)
Coward.

He rips up Eatherly's letter too.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - TIBBETS KITCHEN - MORNING

Lucy scrubs dishes in the kitchen. Looks out the window and sees a gaggle of "support workers" -- including Slotin, the physicist -- walk past. One wears a white lab coat.

EXT. LOS ALAMOS - TIBBETS HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The front door flies open. Lucy stands there, calls after the workers.

LUCY
Hey!

They turn, surprised.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Excuse me, but what exactly do you
fellas do around here?

They hesitate...

SLOTIN
We're sanitation workers.

Lucy folds her arms, narrows her eyes.

LUCY
Is that right?

They nod.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Great. I've got a problem with my
toilet. Think you could help me
out?

They look at each other, stumped.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - TIBBETS BATHROOM - MORNING

Lucy watches as Slotin struggles with her toilet. He clearly has no idea what he's doing.

LUCY

The flapper and flush valve aren't working properly. You can see that, right?

SLOTIN

'course.

She looks him steady in the eye.

LUCY

What's really going on here?

He hesitates, then--

SLOTIN

Rusted pipes.

She shakes her head, exasperated.

EXT. LOS ALAMOS - PLANE HANGAR - DAWN

The crew stands in formation outside the Hangar, waiting for Tibbets. He approaches, stops in front of them.

TIBBETS

Everyone but Eatherly can leave.

They look at each other, but follow the command. Eatherly looks at him, questioning.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)

Just lead pilots today.

Eatherly nods, wary. Tibbets presses a button that opens the hangar door.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)

We're dropping a very big bomb on Japan. It's dangerous. Should wipe out an entire city. But it'll probably kill us too - if we don't clear eight miles.

He's calm, matter of fact. Eatherly looks at him, shocked. Just as he opens his mouth--

GROVES (O.S.)
You're late.

They turn. Groves stands by the plane, chomping on a cigar. Tibbets salutes. He waves it off.

TIBBETS
General--

GROVES
Let's get going, Boys.

TIBBETS
Unfortunately, Sir, today is only
for--

GROVES
Too bad. I'm coming along. Need to
see for myself what's taking you so
damn long.
(beat)
You don't mind, do you?

Tibbets doesn't respond. Looks at Eatherly, who's still reeling.

INT. B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - LATER

Tibbets in the pilot seat. Eatherly is copilot. Behind them, on the wooden plank, is Groves, smoking his cigar.

TIBBETS
Dropping the pumpkin.

Eatherly starts a timer on his watch.

EXT. B29 PLANE - SAME TIME

The dummy bomb hurls downward as the bomb bays close. The plane races above the clouds. Faster now.

INT. B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - MOMENTS LATER

The timer stops at one minute, 23 seconds.

EATHERLY
Four miles.

Tibbets smiles grimly. Eatherly now understands the ramifications of falling short.

TIBBETS
Better than before.

EATHERLY
You said eight, right?

TIBBETS
Yes.

EATHERLY
But we're already six miles away, vertically, from where this thing will explode. So if we flew in a slant line in the opposite direction after release, we'd need five miles. Not eight.

Tibbets looks at him. He's right.

GROVES
The fucking wing is on fire!

They whip around. Flames whip out of the engine beneath the right wing. Tibbets sighs.

TIBBETS
One of the problems with the B29.
Happened in the test flights.
(to Eatherly)
Cut Engine three.

GROVES
What?

TIBBETS
It's fine. We'll probably make it to ground before it spreads to the spar.

GROVES
Probably?

Groves is genuinely terrified for his life. Tibbets, on the other hand, is completely calm. He's been in many worse scrapes.

GROVES (CONT'D)
Are you fucking kidding me?

TIBBETS

Just gotta make sure the fire
doesn't spread to the magnesium in
the engine. That would be bad.

The plane JOLTS upward.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)

It's gonna be a little rocky
without the engine.

GROVES

So turn the damn thing back on!

TIBBETS

It needs to be rocky.

GROVES

I may not have flown a plane in
five years, but I know we need a
goddamn engine to stay in the sky--

EATHERLY

General, the Colonel is right--

TIBBETS

I'm taking a calculated risk, Sir--

GROVES

Turn the engine on! That's a direct
order!

He's panicking. The plane JOLTS again.

TIBBETS

I can't do that, General.

Groves reaches out to flick the engine switch. Tibbets,
acting instinctively, grabs his wrist and keeps him from it.

GROVES

This is fucking insubordination
that will be punished at the
highest level--

Tibbets, his face determined, struggles with the General.

Suddenly, Tibbets lets go of the wrist. And with a swift,
violent blow, KNOCKS THE GENERAL with the back of his elbow.

The general's head bounces off the back of the cockpit. He
slumps to the floor. Out cold.

Eatherly looks at Groves, then back at Tibbets. Stunned. And flush with newfound respect.

EXT. B29 PLANE - MORNING

The plane lands on the runway. The fire still flickering in the engine.

Tibbets's hand juts out of the open cockpit, FIRES A GUN into the air.

Two PARAMEDICS near the runway recognize the signal and sprint towards the plane with a gurney.

The plane rolls to a stop. Tibbets climbs out of the cockpit. Drags Groves out by his feet, struggling to carry him in his arms. The paramedics transfer him onto the gurney.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

Groves lies sleeping in his bed, his chin bandaged.

Tibbets enters with a bouquet of flowers. Leaves them on the bedside table, along with a handwritten card that reads: "I'M SORRY, GENERAL. YOURS, TIBBETS."

INT. LOS ALAMOS - TIBBETS DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Tibbets, Lucy and Mary eat dinner quietly.

The door SLAMS open. Groves stands there, furious.

GROVES

Don't ever fucking do that again.

TIBBETS

Likewise, General Groves.

A beat. A grudging expression of respect appears on the General's face.

GROVES

Nice to see you Lucy. Mary.

Mary salutes.

GROVES (CONT'D)

That smells good.

LUCY
It's meatloaf and potatoes,
General. Why don't you join us?

He takes a seat across from Mary.

GROVES
I don't want to intrude.

Lucy grabs an extra plate, spoons potatoes onto it.

LUCY
So can you tell me why your
sanitation workers know nothing
about plumbing?

Both Groves and Tibbets blanch.

TIBBETS
(warning)
Lucy--

GROVES
Fair question. They're only trained
in underground systems.

LUCY
Right.

Groves continues eating cheerfully.

INT. B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - MORNING

Another practice run. Tibbets and Eatherly next to each other
in the cockpit, racing away from the bomb.

EATHERLY
Five... four... three... two...
ONE!

He shuts the timer off.

EATHERLY (CONT'D)
SIX MILES! WE DID IT!

He cheers himself hoarse.

In the mid and back sections, Dora, Beser, Parsons, Van Kirk,
Ferebee and Caron join in.

Eatherly looks at Tibbets.

EATHERLY (CONT'D)

Come on, nothing?

TIBBETS

Can't tempt fate.

EATHERLY

You don't believe that shit, do you?

TIBBETS

I've seen a lot of men shot while cheering.

Eatherly looks at him, suddenly sober.

EATHERLY

You can't think that way.

Tibbets reluctantly lets out a feeble...

TIBBETS

Hooray.

Eatherly rolls his eyes. Tibbets takes a deep breath and ROARS HIMSELF HOARSE. Eatherly claps him on the back.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - PLANE HANGAR - DAY

As Tibbets and Eatherly walk with the rest of the crew from the plane, they find General Groves, looking sober.

GROVES

Stop everything.

TIBBETS

What's wrong?

Groves shakes his head, walks away.

Tibbets and Eatherly exchange a look.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - GROVES'S OFFICE - LATER

Tibbets watches as Groves carefully takes down the presidential picture of FDR that hangs above his desk.

The picture of Truman, the Vice-President, remains.

GROVES

He didn't even get to see his war end. Died getting his portrait painted.

TIBBETS

What happens now?

Groves shakes his head.

GROVES

Truman doesn't know. About any of this.

Tibbets looks at him, astonished.

GROVES (CONT'D)

Roosevelt didn't want him to know.

TIBBETS

Why?

Groves shrugs.

GROVES

Maybe he didn't think he had the balls.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - MORNING

Groves sits opposite HARRY TRUMAN in the oval office. Next to Groves is HENRY STIMSON (72), Secretary of State.

STIMSON

You need time to think, Sir. This is a lot of information.

Truman looks up, a sharp, intense expression on his face. He sits back in his chair, like it's been his for decades.

TRUMAN

(to Groves)

I want to drop two. Can you do that?

GROVES

(surprised)

Yes, Sir. We can.

TRUMAN

Send me a list of Japanese targets by Monday. Germany's going to fold soon.

Stimson shakes his head, wary.

STIMSON
Sir, I think we should consider the
moral consequences--

TRUMAN
I'm here to save lives, not
perseverate over right or wrong.
And that's what I'm going to do.

Groves grins. He likes this guy.

GROVES
Great sign, by the way.

Sitting at the edge of Truman's desk is a wooden plaque that reads: "THE BUCK STOPS HERE."

EXT. TOKYO - IMPERIAL PALACE GROUNDS - AFTERNOON

Kido and the Emperor watch as a group of BLINDFOLDED AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR are lined up.

Admiral Yanami whips his riding crop as he walks up and down the line of Americans. Selects two. Then bows to the Emperor.

The men are brought forward. Placed in a kneeling position, their necks exposed. Shaking and sweating with fear.

Yanami draws his ceremonial sword out of its sheath. Puts the blade against the neck of the first man. He speaks in English. It's polished. He attended college in the States.

YANAMI
Your people lock us up in
concentration camps. Treat us like
animals.

He lifts the sword. The blindfolded Americans remain perfectly still, terrified, listening. Kido closes his eyes.

The sound of the sword striking flesh.

INT. CAR - MOVING - LATER

After. Kido sits opposite the Emperor. Looks desperately into the eyes of the commander of his country. Wishing he would say or do something.

The Emperor suddenly motions for the car to stop. He opens the door. VOMITS out the side. Then, wiping his mouth, closes it.

He looks at Kido, still says nothing.

EXT. ALMAGORDO TEST SITE - MORNING

The grounds crawl with scientists, technicians and engineers.

Tibbets and the crew stand in front of a 100-FOOT STEEL TOWER. Behind them is a parked JEEP.

A winch pulls an ENORMOUS METAL SPHERE from the open jeep to the top of the tower.

SUPER: "Bomb Test Day, July 1945"

TIBBETS

You're looking at the world's first atomic bomb.

The men look at each other.

BESER

What the hell's an atomic bomb?

None of them have ever heard the phrase before. Most people hadn't.

TIBBETS

You're about to find out.

PARSONS

When?

TIBBETS

Now.

Another JEEP pulls up and an AIDE clammers out.

AIDE

(shouting)

Colonel!

INT. LOS ALAMOS - HOSPITAL - PATIENT ROOM - DAY

Slotin, the physicist from earlier, lies in bed unconscious. He's emaciated. Right hand swollen like a balloon, covered in massive blisters that ooze blood and pus. Lips are blue. Face covered with an oxygen tent.

A DOCTOR, Groves, Oppenheimer and Tibbets stand next to him. Oppenheimer is broken, emotional.

OPPENHEIMER

The screwdriver slipped. While he was testing the critical mass on a sample. Just a small sample. I was in the room. There was a blue flash. We looked back and...

DOCTOR

These burns extend into his body. Like a three dimensional sunburn. All his internal organs... they're black and dead.

Tibbets looks at Groves, haunted.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Maybe you can't tell me, but what the hell was he exposed to?

Neither man answers.

GROVES

We'll postpone the test by a day. No more.

He looks down at Slotin.

GROVES (CONT'D)

Poor bastard.

OPPENHEIMER

He's still alive, Leslie. Don't talk about him like he's not still here.

Groves gives Oppenheimer an exasperated look, then leaves.

Tibbets stares at Slotin. Underneath the oxygen tent, he can make out a blackened, disfigured face.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - TIBBETS LIVING ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Tibbets is drawing every curtain shut. It's dark outside.

Lucy enters in her robe, sleepy.

LUCY

It's 4am. What are you doing?

TIBBETS

You need to keep Mary in her room
the entire morning. No exceptions.
She can eat breakfast in there. If
she needs to go to the bathroom, go
with her. And make it quick, okay?

LUCY

What the hell is this about, Paul?

He's not listening.

TIBBETS

On second thought, she should stay
in the basement. You should too.

He draws the last curtain shut.

EXT. ALMAGORDO TEST SITE - OBSERVATION SHELTERS - MORNING

It's the crack of dawn. Still dark.

Ten miles from the tower, the crew, including Tibbets,
slather sun screen onto their exposed skin. Oppenheimer and
Groves are also present.

An AIDE passes out protective GOGGLES.

They all lie down on their bellies, feet toward the tower,
face away from the blast.

Tibbets turns to address his crew.

TIBBETS

Don't look up.

A RADIO begins COUNTING DOWN.

RADIO VOICE (O.S.)

Ten... Nine... Eight...

EXT. ALMAGORDO TEST SITE - TOWER - SAME TIME

In a wooden crate at the top of the tower, the bomb glistens.
A caged animal, wrapped in tubes and wires like steel
entrails.

EXT. ALMAGORDO TEST SITE - FURTHER OUT - SAME TIME

A RABBIT bounces into sight. It shakes with the cold. Nibbles
at a small green tendril sprouting out of a plant.

EXT. ALMAGORDO TEST SITE - SHELTERS - MOMENTS LATER

Tibbets, even with his eyes shaded by goggles, shuts his eyes tightly.

RADIO VOICE
Three... Two...

Oppenheimer sits up, cross-legged, facing the tower.

Everyone else remains face down.

RADIO VOICE (CONT'D)
One.

Silence.

A bright light of astonishing intensity shines on Oppenheimer's exposed face, twisted into a wild smile.

The lights shift from PURPLE to GRAY to WHITE to GREEN. We don't see the explosion itself, just the colors flickering.

The men and Dora slowly get up, turn to look.

A WAVE OF WIND, an aftershock from the explosion, THROWS THEM TO THE GROUND.

Then, delayed by the speed of sound, a LOUD AND DEEP BOOM. They cover their ears, already capped with earplugs.

Out of all the observers, only Tibbets remains on the ground. His eyes still tightly clenched. Head literally buried in the sand.

The colors change above and around him.

As the noise booms through his earplugs, Tibbets flinches, clearly triggering. Face covered in sweat, he hunches into the ground like he's under attack.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - TIBBETS LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Lucy, still in her robe, sees flashes of light. She slowly but decisively pulls open a curtain.

Her face is suddenly lit, as if by a spotlight. Her eyes widen.

She gasps. Hears Mary's footsteps behind her - YANKS THE CURTAINS SHUT just in time.

MARY
What is it, Mommy?

CUT TO BLACK:

EXT. ALMAGORDO TEST SITE - TOWER - DAY

Hours later. The explosion over.

Tibbets, Groves and Oppenheimer tour the site of the destroyed tower.

The desert sand has turned to A GREEN GLASSY SUBSTANCE FOR MILES AROUND THEM. It crunches under their feet. Every plant and hill has vanished.

It's like someone erased a part of the Earth.

TIBBETS
What happened to the tower?

OPPENHEIMER
Evaporated. Poof.

GROVES
And what is this shit?

He indicates the green substance with his foot. Oppenheimer shrugs.

OPPENHEIMER
They're testing it. Like glass, but not quite.

A beat. Tibbets is silent. Trying to wrap his head around it.

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)
It looked like a giant eyeball.

GROVES
You saw it?

Oppenheimer looks out over the desolation, his affect stranger than usual.

OPPENHEIMER
I am become death, destroyer of worlds.

Groves stares at him.

GROVES

Oppie, I don't know what the fuck
you're talking about.

OPPENHEIMER

We should leave. It's hot.

GROVES

It's not that hot.

OPPENHEIMER

As in radioactive.

INT. JEEP - MOVING - DAY

Groves at the wheel. Tibbets and Oppenheimer ride in back.

TIBBETS

How is Slotin?

Oppie shrugs, dispirited.

GROVES

We're moving the bomb and your crew
to Tinian. Small island off Japan.
You'll launch from there.

OPPENHEIMER

No, it's not ready. The explosion
pattern was smaller than predicted.

GROVES

Oppie, we just blew up half of New
Mexico.

OPPENHEIMER

The ordnance was off. Delayed by a
half-second.

GROVES

A half-second is fine.

They pass a pile of small CHARRED BONES. Completely stripped
of flesh. Where the rabbit used to be. Oppenheimer blanches.

OPPENHEIMER

I need more time--

GROVES

You're out of fucking time.

It's clear Oppenheimer is having second thoughts. For many
reasons. He looks helplessly at Tibbets.

Groves twists back in his seat to look at them. The Jeep starts to veer off the road.

Groves's gaze remains fixed, intense. Oppie wilts under it.

GROVES (CONT'D)
They are dirty, ungentlemanly, primitive bastards. They eat raw fish. While sitting on the floor. They're animals. Beasts of the jungles. They never surrender, never give in. They'll blow themselves into smithereens with a hand grenade just to get some flak on you.

He turns back around just in time to keep the Jeep from veering into a ditch.

Off Tibbets, still reeling from what he's seen.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - TIBBETS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tibbets carries his suitcase into the living room, where Lucy waits, withdrawn.

LUCY
The Bible says the apocalypse begins with a 'fire of destruction.'

TIBBETS
When did you start reading the bible?

LUCY
I don't know what else to do.

TIBBETS
There's nothing to do.

LUCY
You should have said no.

TIBBETS
That's not how the military works.

LUCY
Do you really think they can't find anyone else to drop the atomic bomb?

TIBBETS
Lucy. I **want** to do this.

A beat.

LUCY
That's your choice. But I have
choices too.

TIBBETS
What does that mean?

LUCY
I don't know if Mary and I will be
here when you come back.

He blinks. Not sure if she's serious.

LUCY (CONT'D)
I'm tired of being a bystander. I
don't know exactly what you're
doing. But I don't like it. And I
don't want my daughter anywhere
near it.

She storms off, slams the bedroom door behind her.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - TIBBETS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Tibbets tries the door. Locked.

TIBBETS
Come on, Lucy. Open the door.

No answer. He bangs on it, frustrated.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)
Lucy. Grow up. This is bigger than
you.

Silence.

He leans his head against the door. Then just as he turns to walk away, he sees Mary, alone in the hallway.

She looks up at him, eyes wide and fearful.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)
Sweetheart--

She steels herself, trying to look brave.

MARY
Are you going away again?

TIBBETS
Yes.

MARY
Forever?

EXT. LOS ALAMOS - AIR HANGAR - NIGHT

Tibbets and Mary walk, hand in hand, towards the massive B29. It's evening, the compound abandoned.

MARY
Mommy's gonna be mad.

He picks her up.

TIBBETS
Mommy's already mad.

INT. B29 PLANE - BOMB BAY - EVENING

Mary, gleeful, races around the metal scaffolding that surrounds a PUMPKIN.

She runs up and touches the orange metal with a little trepidation.

MARY
Is this what's going to kill all
the murdering Japs?

He looks at her, caught off guard.

INT. B29 PLANE - FLYING - EVENING

Tibbets and Mary, above the clouds. She's strapped into the copilot chair. Sitting very still, watching her father with awe, like he's a superhero.

TIBBETS
I was twelve the first time I flew.
Just a little older than you.

He looks over the edge of the cockpit. And...

EXT. FLASHBACK - ILLINOIS FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

We're on the ground, looking up at a YOUNG TIBBETS, in the passenger seat of an old biplane. He peers down at us.

TIBBETS (O.S.)

Your grandparents were candy-makers in Illinois. They hired a guy to fly low over football games so we could drop Baby Ruths. Like manna from heaven. With little parachutes.

Tibbets, sitting behind the pilot, reaches out and drops CHOCOLATE BARS attached to PARACHUTES. They fall from the plane, one by one.

We follow one of the chocolate bars, floating slowly down to the field.

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

My momma, when I told her I was leaving school to fly, she didn't get mad, just said, 'You'll be all right.'

The chocolate bar drifts into the hands of a WOMAN (30s) who looks up at her son in the sky, smiling.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)

She knew I loved it. Being up here.

INT. B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - EVENING

Mary listens, rapt. He turns to look at her. She clammers into his lap.

MARY

I love it up here too. I wanna be a pilot. Like you, Daddy.

He wraps her little fingers around the throttle. Kisses the top of her head. She squeals with glee as he pushes down on the throttle, lowering the plane in the sky.

TIBBETS

We're dumping the flaps now.

She giggles.

MARY

Where's the gun? I wanna shoot Japs.

He freezes a little.

TIBBETS
We don't have guns on this plane,
honey.

MARY
I wanna pretend!

He reluctantly puts her hands on the trigger that controls the wing-mounted guns, now inactive. She pulls on it eagerly.

MARY (CONT'D)
POW! POW! POW!

Her fake gunshots ring into the night sky. Tibbets watches, stroking her hair. He places his hand on hers, gently pulls it back from the trigger.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - PLANE HANGAR - NIGHT

Eatherly paces back and forth, pumped up. The rest of the crew is more subdued, particularly Dora, who sits on the plane wing, dangling her legs.

EATHERLY
That was fucking amazing! Why
didn't we use that on the Germans?

Nobody answers. Dora looks a little nauseated.

EATHERLY (CONT'D)
It's hotter than a thousand suns.
Combined. It's gonna burn them
alive.

PARSONS
They're gonna melt like chocolate.

Tibbets enters. The men stand at attention, salute.

TIBBETS
We move to Tinian tomorrow.

They look at each other, uneasy.

DORA
Just like that? Is this right? Are
we ready?

Tibbets blinks, conflicted.

DORA (CONT'D)
I mean... is it even safe?

Tibbets looks at his crew. Sees Dora's uncertainty reflected in all of their eyes, even Fetherly's.

Then his eyes harden.

TIBBETS
You have a lot of questions, Dora.
Maybe you're not ready.

Dora is taken aback.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)
A mission like this, there's no
room for doubt.

DORA
I thought you wanted to talk about
what happened yesterday?

TIBBETS
And I thought you wanted this
mission. More than anything.

DORA
I did. I... do.

But she's clearly conflicted.

TIBBETS
Too late. You're out. Go back to
your dorm. We're transferring non-
essential personnel to a base in
Alaska.

Dora's mouth drops open.

DORA
Are you serious?

TIBBETS
Anyone else have any questions?
Concerns?

He looks at the men, all shocked.

EXT. LOS ALAMOS - MOMENTS LATER

Tibbets walks quickly through the base.

DORA (O.S.)
Tibbets.

He keeps walking. She catches up.

DORA (CONT'D)
What the hell was that?

He suddenly stops, looks at her.

TIBBETS
You asked if this mission was safe.
Why?

DORA
I--

TIBBETS
It doesn't matter why. It was the
wrong question.

DORA
It wasn't wrong.

They just look at each other. Then a sudden realization hits Dora.

DORA (CONT'D)
I know what you're doing.

TIBBETS
Go to Alaska, Dora.

And he walks away.

INT. TOKYO - IMPERIAL PALACE GROUNDS - EVENING

Kido is ushered into an opulent bedroom.

The Emperor sits at a desk. He's writing on a large scroll. He turns to Kido, his expression questioning. Kido bows deeply.

KIDO
I am sorry to bother you at this
time of night, Your Majesty.

The Emperor nods his head slightly.

KIDO (CONT'D)
I received word from a man named
Bern in Switzerland.
(MORE)

KIDO (CONT'D)
He wishes to help us negotiate
peace with the United States.

The Emperor doesn't react.

KIDO (CONT'D)
I'll inform the Cabinet tomorrow.
(beat)
I'm sure they'll say no.

The Emperor is impassive, silent. Kido sighs deeply.

KIDO (CONT'D)
Your father always used to say the
most admirable fish was the carp.
It can swim upstream. Leap through
steep falls. Evade bears, men. A
fighter fish. But once caught and
put on the cutting board, he lays
quiet, accepting what must be.

The Emperor considers this. But still says nothing.

After a while, Kido bows and leaves. As he reaches the door--

EMPEROR
Tell them we want peace.

His voice trembles, but his face looks hopeful. Kido smiles,
grateful and surprised.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Truman sits opposite Stimson and the Joint Chiefs. He's
leaning back in his chair, fingers steepled.

STIMSON
(reading from a telegram)
The message is through Bern in
Switzerland. Comes straight from
the Emperor. They're willing to
surrender if you call it a
'negotiated peace' rather than
'unconditional surrender.' And if
you agree to preserve the monarchy.

TRUMAN
No.

STIMSON
Sir, we could avoid a lot of
bloodshed...
(MORE)

STIMSON (CONT'D)
these phrases, unconditional
surrender, negotiated peace... it's
semantics, after all.

TRUMAN
We have an atomic bomb. We don't
need to negotiate with anybody.

JOINT CHIEF
And we spent two billion dollars on
it. So we better fucking use it.

STIMSON
If I may say so, I don't think a
decision of this magnitude should
be made based on pride. Or money.

TRUMAN
Every week, four thousand boys die
in the Pacific.

STIMSON
We could stage a demonstration for
them. A warning.

TRUMAN
I want you to return a counter
immediately. I'll draft it myself.

STIMSON
Saying what?

Truman just looks at the Joint Chief.

TRUMAN
Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The chief nods approval. Stimson throws up his hands.

STIMSON
I'm 72 years old. I don't have
kids. It shouldn't even matter to
me. If this is the world you want
your children to inherit, so be it.

EXT. TOKYO - SKY - DAY

An American plane coasts high above the city. The bomb bay
opens and PROPAGANDA LEAFLETS drop out, fluttering down.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
We call upon the government of
Japan to proclaim now the
unconditional surrender of all
Japanese armed forces.

EXT. TOKYO - STREET - SAME TIME

Akira, catching one of the leaflets, folds it into an ORIGAMI SWAN.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
And to provide proper and adequate
assurances of their good faith in
such action. The alternative for
Japan is prompt and utter
destruction.

INT. TOKYO - IMPERIAL WAR ROOM - DAY

Another imperial war meeting with the Emperor at the head of
the table.

Yanami finishes reading the Potsdam Declaration. It was his
voice above.

He rips it into tiny shreds, disgusted.

YANAMI
Do they think we'll retreat like
scared rabbits?

Nobody answers. The Emperor is frozen. Kido looks to him
urgently, but he says nothing.

YANAMI (CONT'D)
I know the Emperor is no rabbit.

The Emperor avoids Yanami's gaze. He appears frightened.

Yanami slides another war order across the table.

YANAMI (CONT'D)
Authorization for the placement of
troops in the Kyushu beach.

KIDO
Your Majesty. Please tell us. Is
this what you desire?

YANAMI
How dare you address His Majesty--

The Emperor, unnerved, starts to pour wax.

KIDO
Your Majesty, I know it is
unorthodox, but please speak. You
can stop this.

The Emperor looks at Kido, apologetic. Lowers his stamp.

INT. TOKYO - KIDO'S HOUSE - DAY

Natsuko (Kido's wife), looks on, panicked, as Kido rapidly packs their belongings into suitcases.

Akira sits cross-legged on the floor, watching his parents.

KIDO
You'll be safe there. Hiroshima has
been spared from the attacks.

NATSUKO
What if they're saving it for
something?

KIDO
For what?

Natsuko comes closer to her husband, speaks softly.

NATSUKO
Kido, why is this happening?

Something snaps in him.

KIDO
Because the Emperor is a coward!

Stunned by the blasphemy, Natsuko slaps him.

Akira runs to Kido's side, hugs him.

KIDO (CONT'D)
Your mother's right, Akira. I
shouldn't have said that.

Akira looks at him, then places an arm around his mother, enfolding her in their embrace.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - OPPENHEIMER'S FACILITY - AFTERNOON

Oppenheimer and Tibbets watch as TERRIFIED SOLDIERS pack the ATOMIC BOMB (oblong, 12 feet long) into a wooden crate.

Oppenheimer suddenly turns to Tibbets. Gestures to the bomb.

OPPENHEIMER
I lied. It's perfect.

TIBBETS
I know.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - TIBBETS HOUSE - MARY'S ROOM - EVENING

A half-moon night-light illuminates Mary as she sleeps. Tibbets kisses her on the forehead. Gently squeezes her little hand.

Her eyes flicker open.

TIBBETS
Count the moons for me. Then tell
me how many you saw while I was
gone.

She nods, trying to stay awake. He stands still, watches her eyes close. After a moment, he heads out.

MARY
Don't forget to dump your flaps.

He turns back, smiles.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - TIBBETS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

He picks up his suitcase, looks back at Lucy's closed bedroom door. Knocks on the door. There's no reply.

INT. TOKYO - KIDO'S HOUSE - MORNING

Kido wakes up. Looks at his wife's side of the bed. She's not there.

He walks through the now empty house. Finds his son's ORIGAMI SWAN on the ground.

INT. TRAIN - MOVING - MORNING

Natsuko sits with her arm tight around her son. Looks out the window as Japanese countryside rolls by.

AKIRA
(whisper)
When I grow up, I want to be
American.

NATSUKO
Why would you say that?

AKIRA
I won't say it to anyone else. I
just want to marry Shirley Temple.

NATSUKO
Akira--

AKIRA
On the Good Ship Lollipop.

NATSUKO
That's not real.

AKIRA
I know.

She caresses his hair.

AKIRA (CONT'D)
Dad isn't going to die, is he?

Can't look him in the eye.

NATSUKO
Of course not.

EXT. LOS ALAMOS - ENTRANCE - DAY

A PARADE OF CARS exits the compound with HEAVY POLICE
PROTECTION.

INT. TRUCK - DRIVING - DAY

Tibbets and Groves sit in the back of a large flatbed pickup
truck jostling along the dirt road.

Groves knocks on the divider separating them from the DRIVER.

GROVES
Drive a little more gently, will
ya? We've got a fragile load here.

In front of them is the WOODEN CRATE.

GROVES (CONT'D)
(to Tibbets)
Oppie named it 'The Little Boy.'

Tibbets looks out the window.

GROVES (CONT'D)
'Cuz it's littler than the one they
tested. They think the fat bomb
looks like Churchill and this one
looks like Roosevelt.
(beat)
May he rest in peace.

BOOM. The truck SUDDENLY JOLTS upwards.

The wooden crate LIFTS OFF THE FLOOR. When it lands, one of
the wooden walls comes unhinged, and the BOMB rolls out.

EXT. LOS ALAMOS - ROAD - DAY

The truck's tire has blown. The truck staggers forward,
ROLLING INTO A NEARBY DITCH, as official-looking men stream
out of nearby cars.

INT. TRUCK - MOVING - DAY

The bomb rolls back and forth, CRASHING against the side of
the truck.

Tibbets ineffectually tries to stabilize it. Groves reaches
for the cross around his neck.

When the truck's descent into the ditch slows, the bomb
CAREENS towards them, landing with a THUD between their
boots.

Finally, the truck lurches to a stop.

The bomb lies still.

They look at it, expecting it to go off at any moment.

GROVES
Jesus H. Christ.

CUT TO BLACK:

EXT. TINIAN ISLAND - MORNING

A hot, tropical island off the coast of Japan.

Tibbets lands a B29 onto the long runway between thatched huts.

EXT. TINIAN ISLAND - DAY

Two SOLDIERS draped in weapons sit next to a LARGE WOODEN CRATE. They rest their beers on it, smoking.

INT. TINIAN ISLAND - HUT - DAY

Tibbets and his crew open the door to find a row of beds covered in mosquito nets. A lazy fan blows warm air overhead.

Beser opens a window. They look out at the untouched jungle.

BESER

My buddy in the 509 says there are Japs still out there. In the jungle. Fugitives from when we commandeered the island.

INT. B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - DAY

SUPER: "TWO DAYS TO MISSION"

Tibbets and Eatherly sit in the cockpit. They're idling on the Tinian packed dirt runway.

TIBBETS

(into headset)

Remember we're just doing surveillance. A practice run. They'll assume we're weather planes since there are only two of us. Point is for them to get used to us.

Lewis and Beser, in the adjacent plane, give a thumbs-up through the cockpit window.

EXT. B29 PLANE - DAY

Two B29s fly low over Hiroshima.

The city, considered one of the most beautiful in Japan, stretches out below them. It's engulfed in a green valley. The HIROSHIMA CASTLE, military headquarters, juts out above every other structure, most wooden with tile roofs.

INT. B29 PLANE - SAME TIME

Eatherly looks out the cockpit window. His tone is jaunty.

EATHERLY
I can see them. Little black dots
moving.

TIBBETS
You can't see shit from this
height.

EATHERLY
They all have black hair, you know.

TIBBETS
I know.

EATHERLY
(quiet)
They have no idea.

EXT. TINIAN ISLAND - HUT - NIGHT

Eatherly and the other men drink heavily, play poker.

Tibbets enters. With no preamble--

TIBBETS
Tomorrow. Zero-two-thirty.

He turns, leaving the men astonished.

Eatherly chugs from the Tequila in his hand.

EATHERLY
Our last night in the hell jungle,
boys. Are we going to have some
fun?

His voice is strained.

EATHERLY (CONT'D)
Who's up for a Jap hunt?

INT. TINIAN ISLAND - HUT - NIGHT

Tibbets, in his hut, looks at a picture of Lucy and Mary.
Then climbs under the sheets. Stares at the ceiling.

He closes his eyes - immediately hears GUN SHOTS and EXPLOSIONS, the beginnings of a flashback. His eyes pop open again.

He swats away a bug.

EXT. TINIAN ISLAND - JUNGLE - NIGHT

Eatherly, smoking, tequila in one hand, leads an expedition through the jungle.

His flashlight glows in the dark. They're surrounded by the sounds of animals moving past them. It's eerie.

FEREBEE

Didn't we clear the island when we took it?

BESER

Jungle's too dense.

(beat)

They say there are dozens of Japs out here. Whole regiments. Living in caves.

Parsons suddenly claps his arms on Beser's shoulders and Beser JUMPS, terrified. Punches Parsons.

They hear a rustling. Eatherly swings his flashlight around wildly. He motions for the other men to stop.

The rustling continues. Eatherly shines his light directly on a clump of low-lying plants. Movement behind it.

A dark figure crouches behind the leaves.

EATHERLY

Hey! Don't be afraid. We've got food. Cigarettes.

The leaves shake again.

Then, gradually, an EXHAUSTED LOOKING JAPANESE SOLDIER EMERGES. His hands up.

Eatherly grins.

INT. TINIAN ISLAND - HUT - NIGHT

Tibbets is still unable to sleep.

A LOUD KNOCKING at his door.

EXT. TINIAN ISLAND - OUTSIDE STORAGE SHED - NIGHT

Tibbets, surrounded by his men, stands with his arms folded. They're all looking inside a supply shed at...

The Japanese soldier, cowering in a corner. He bows down.

EATHERLY

Don't be fooled, Tibby. He'll
butcher us in a heartbeat.

BESER

Let him go, no telling who he talks
to.

Tibbets's expression is inscrutable.

EATHERLY

You should be proud of us.

TIBBETS

Give him some food and water. Then
lock the door.

He walks away.

Eatherly kicks the soldier in the stomach. Shoves him
further into the shed, then slams the door in his frightened
face.

INT. TINIAN ISLAND - TIBBETS HUT - NIGHT

Tibbets. Back in bed. Looks at his watch. It's 2 AM.

EXT. TINIAN ISLAND - OUTSIDE STORAGE SHED - NIGHT

Tibbets returns. The supply closet is jammed shut with
crates. Eatherly is keeping "guard" -- he's asleep with a
bottle of tequila in his hand.

Tibbets opens the door. The Japanese soldier looks up at him,
fearful.

TIBBETS

Come on. Get out of here.

He gestures into the night.

The Japanese soldier walks out, wary. As he passes Tibbets,
his eyes glint in the dark.

He suddenly GRABS TIBBETS'S GUN. As he fumbles to use it, Tibbets slams him to the ground.

They struggle with each other.

Eatherly wakes up. Reaches for his gun and aims -- but the men are rolling too fast for a clear shot.

Tibbets slams his elbow into the Japanese soldier's neck. The gun clatters out of his hand.

Then Tibbets knees him in the groin. Stomach. Chest. He's clearly overpowered him, but aware of Eatherly's gaze, Tibbets continues KICKING him. It's gratuitous.

He doesn't want to be this guy, but feels he has to be.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)
FUCKING JAP.

Eatherly watches, in shock.

Tibbets shoves the soldier back into the closet. Slams the door shut.

Stands there, heaving. Eatherly says nothing.

Tibbets stalks back to his hut without another word.

INT. TINIAN ISLAND - HUT - NIGHT

Still breathing hard, Tibbets falls back on the bed. Eyes open.

INT. TINIAN ISLAND - SUPPORT HUT - LATER

Tibbets shakes awake a MECHANIC, dozing with other technicians in a hut.

EXT. TINIAN ISLAND - RUNWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The mechanic, barely awake, looks at a PIECE of PAPER handed to him by Tibbets.

TIBBETS
Below the nose.

The mechanic nods. Drags over a bucket of RED PAINT.

INT. TINIAN ISLAND - HUT - SAME TIME

Quietly and somberly, the crew rises from their few hours of sleep.

They begin making beds, putting on boots, strapping coveralls over shirts and undershirts.

EXT. TINIAN ISLAND - RUNWAY - NIGHT

A CREW of SCIENTISTS, ENGINEERS and SOLDIERS guide the ATOMIC BOMB (now on a trolley) into the bay of the open B29. Sharp floodlights illuminate the scene.

Fire trucks and ambulances position themselves at even intervals along the length of the runway.

Tibbets watches the preparations somberly. He sees his crew walking towards him, dark shapes in the night.

He nods as they arrive, saluting.

Beser points to the nose. The words "ENOLA GAY" freshly painted.

BESER
Enola Gay?

TIBBETS
Enola Gay Haggard is my mother's name.
(beat)
Anyone have a problem with that?

Eatherly smirks, but nobody says a word.

INT. B29 PLANE - BOMB BAY - NIGHT

The crew crowds the catwalks that line the walls of the bomb bay. The bomb is now attached via an elaborate 24-wire interface to an electric console.

Eatherly WRITES on the surface of the bomb with a marker.

EATHERLY
Your Majesty, Emperor Hirohito.
Fuck You.

He passes the marker to the next man, who draws a PENIS.

INT. TINIAN ISLAND - MESS HALL / HUT - NIGHT

The men quietly eat breakfast. Tibbets doesn't touch his.

PARSONS

You gonna give a pep talk, boss?

Tibbets stands. Looks at all of them. Takes a deep breath, as if he's about to embark on a moving speech--

TIBBETS

Don't eat too much. We can't afford the extra weight.

He walks out. That was it.

EXT. TINIAN ISLAND - RUNWAY - NIGHT

As they walk down the runway, they see HUNDREDS OF PHOTOGRAPHERS and a VIDEO CREW standing outside the two B29 planes (the second is for Eatherly and his back-up crew).

Groves greets the men with a grin.

GROVES

I hope you realize you're going to be famous. Whether you live or not.

He claps Tibbets on the shoulder.

TIBBETS

What the hell is all this, General?

GROVES

I arranged a little send off for you boys. Now smile for our guests.

As they walk down a narrow path, almost like a red carpet, the photographers yell for their attention.

Tibbets, deeply uncomfortable, offers a timid smile.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Hey! Look like you're thinking about what you're about to do. Like you feel the full weight of it.

Tibbets grits his teeth, but can't help but comply. It is what he's thinking about.

Groves, on the other hand, poses for multiple pictures, grinning, basking in the attention.

Tibbets quietly takes him by the arm.

TIBBETS
Get them out of here.

GROVES
Tibbets--

TIBBETS
Now.

INT. B29 PLANE - BOMB BAY - NIGHT

The press are gone. Groves, Tibbets and the crew watch as the bomb bay slowly closes its doors.

A CHAPLAIN nervously approaches.

CHAPLAIN
General Groves. You asked me to
read a homily before flight.

GROVES
Yes, yes, Father. Make it quick.

The Chaplain pulls out an ENVELOPE, reads from hastily scrawled notes on the back of it.

CHAPLAIN
Almighty Father, Who wilt hear the
prayer of them that love Thee, we
pray Thee to be with those who
brave the heights of Thy heaven and
who carry the battle to our
enemies. Guard and protect them--

GROVES
(bored)
Okay, that's terrific.

He pats the Chaplain on the back. Tibbets, trying to hold on, watches as he's ushered away.

GROVES (CONT'D)
Let's keep it moving.

INT. B29 PLANE - COCKPIT / MID SECTION / TAIL GUN - NIGHT

CHYRON: 2:40 AM

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

- Caron squeezes into the tail gunner compartment. Pulls on a Brooklyn Dodger's cap.
- Beser straps on a survival vest with fish hooks, a drinking-water kit, first aid package, emergency food rations, parachute harness and a one-man life raft. Parsons watches this elaborate process, amused. He's wearing only coveralls.
- Tibbets and Eatherly sit in the pilot and copilot seats, flipping switches, performing final checks. Tibbets opens a small metal box containing five cyanide pills. He takes one and puts it in a vest pocket. Then passes the box to Eatherly, who does the same.

EXT. LOS ALAMOS - TIBBETS LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Lucy hears a KNOCK at the door, freezes. Then walks bravely to the door. Opens it.

Dora reaches out a hand--

DORA

We don't know each other. I'm from beyond the fence.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - TIBBETS LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Dora and Lucy sit opposite each other on couches.

Mary lacks her usual enthusiasm as she plays with her toy plane.

DORA

He was trying to save me. From the mission. Which is really fucking annoying.

Noticing Mary--

DORA (CONT'D)

Sorry.

LUCY

That's what men like him do. They try to save us. And everyone.

Dora nods. Lucy seems less angry now. Just sad.

LUCY (CONT'D)

I didn't say goodbye this time.

Dora takes her hand.

DORA

It doesn't matter. He knows you're
always with him.

LUCY

Maybe I don't want to be.

Dora studies her. Then, quietly--

DORA

First he'll take a deep breath.
Then he'll start the number three
engine. Then four. Then one and
two.

Mary looks up, she's listening.

EXT. TINIAN ISLAND - RUNWAY - NIGHT

The B29 sits at the base of the runway.

As Tibbets fires up the plane, Dora's voice carries over.

DORA (O.S.)

The rush... when you feel the plane
buzzing beneath you. It's hard to
describe.

TIBBETS

(into intercom)

This is Dimples Eight-two to North
Tinian Tower. Ready for taxi out
and takeoff instructions.

RADIO VOICE (O.S.)

Tower to Dimples Eight-two. Clear
to taxi. Take off on runway A for
Able.

The plane rolls forward.

DORA (O.S.)

Now the take-off weight is 150,000
pounds. He has to hold the bomber
on the ground until the last moment
to build up every possible knot of
speed before lift off. He needs to
get to 2550 RPM before pulling the
nose up.

The scenery outside begins to hurtle past. Ambulances and
fire trucks flash by.

DORA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(wistful)
Your heart is in your throat.
Adrenaline pulsing through your
body. You know you're about to defy
gravity. It's the best part. It's
the worst part.

The edge of the runway, where it falls off into the ocean,
approaches. Deep black beyond. The RPM dial nears 2000.

LUCY (O.S.)
I hope they can't take off. Ever.

EATHERLY
Lift it up. Now! Or we're going to
submarine--

The edge is even closer now. But something feels wrong.

SUDDENLY TIBBETS SLAMS THE BRAKES.

EATHERLY (CONT'D)
What the hell are you doing?

The plane machinery SCREECHES as the massive aircraft strains
to slow down.

The edge of the runway rapidly approaches.

Just in time, the wheels stop rolling. Inches from the edge.

EXT. TINIAN ISLAND - RUNWAY - NIGHT

The plane is back at the base of the runway. Tibbets stands
outside the fuel tank with a crowd of TECHNICIANS.

TIBBETS
Take out 400 gallons. We won't make
it with all the extra weight.

TECHNICIAN
That means one pass on Hiroshima.

TIBBETS
I know what it means.

EXT. TINIAN ISLAND - RUNWAY - NIGHT

Again, Tibbets and his crew hurtle down the runway. The black
edge looms ahead.

The RPM dial pushes up to 2300... 2400...

The edge getting closer and closer. 2500.

Tibbets pulls back on the control wheel.

The plane lifts into the air. Eatherly exhales.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - TIBBETS LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Dora and Lucy watch silently as Mary lifts her plane into the air.

INT. B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - NIGHT

Tibbets breathes a measured sigh of relief as the aircraft breaks above cloud level.

EATHERLY
Five hours until we're there.
(beat)
Poker?

Tibbets shakes his head. Eatherly reads the stress on his face. It's beginning to affect him too.

EATHERLY (CONT'D)
When was the last time you slept?

TIBBETS
It's been a while.

INT. B29 PLANE - BOMB BAY - SAME TIME

Parsons arms the bomb. His sleeves are rolled up, hands and forearms covered in black graphite.

He reads off a piece of paper taped to the bomb, a checklist.

PARSONS
Ensure green plugs are installed.
Check. Remove rear plate. Okay.
Remove armor plate. Got it. Insert
breech wrench in breech plug.
Yep...

Beser is lying on the catwalk. Napping.

INT. B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - MORNING

Dawn breaks. Tibbets and Eatherly watch in silence as the sun crests the horizon. The sky gradually turns from black to a deep pink. The moon remains, a pale ghost.

EXT. HIROSHIMA BASE - SAME TIME

SUPER: "HIROSHIMA AIR FORCE BASE"

Admiral Yanami, on a white horse with black fetlocks, enters the air force base, riding fast between black and yellow planes.

EXT. HIROSHIMA CASTLE - COURTYARD - SAME TIME

SUPER: "HIROSHIMA CASTLE"

Miles away, in the heart of the city, troops in the castle courtyard wait, motionless, for the signal to begin morning calisthenics. When it comes, they instantly fall into formation, moving fluently, as one. All except a handful of stragglers. Closer, we see these men are blindfolded. They are AMERICAN POWS. Though malnourished and sleep deprived, they are forced to keep up with the demanding pace.

INT. HIROSHIMA - APARTMENT - MORNING

Natsuko, Kido's wife, wakes up in their small apartment. She looks at her son, Akira, curled up next to her.

They are surrounded by unpacked boxes.

EXT. HIROSHIMA - STREET - MORNING

Natsuko and Akira walk down the already bustling street, passing a German priest, a doctor in whites, a crowd of schoolgirls in uniform, neighbors in kimonos.

They stop at a food cart. The offerings are meager. She sighs.

Suddenly an AIR RAID SIREN blares. Everyone looks up at it. The FOOD VENDOR shakes his head.

VENDOR
(sighing)
Every morning.

Business continues as usual, the people accustomed to daily false alarms.

Down the street, Natsuko watches as an anxious MAN IN A GREY KIMONO leads his family into an underground shelter.

INT. HIROSHIMA AIR FORCE BASE - MORNING

Yanami, accompanied by lower level lieutenants and generals, stands over a RADAR OPERATOR frowning at a radar screen.

RADAR OPERATOR
30 bombers to the Inland Sea. 65 to
Saga. 102 to Maebashi. 261 to
Nishinomiya-Mikage, 111 to Ube, 66
to Imabari.
(beat)
And two for Hiroshima.

YANAMI
Just two?

The operator nods.

YANAMI (CONT'D)
Strange.

RADAR OPERATOR
Probably just weather planes. Not
worth the bullets.

Yanami mulls on this.

INT. B29 PLANE - BOMB BAY - SAME TIME

Parsons continues reading off the checklist as he arms the bomb.

PARSONS
Unscrew breech plug, place on
rubber pad. Insert charge, four
sections, red ends to breech.

This is the most important step. He pours gunpowder into the bomb. Then replaces the green plugs with red plugs.

Forgets one of the plugs -- quickly catches his mistake, laughing nervously.

PARSONS (CONT'D)
(repeating)
Red ends to breech.

Then wipes sweat off his forehead. The black comes off, darkening his skin.

PARSONS (CONT'D)
Insert breech plug and tighten
home. Connect firing line. Install
armor plate. Install rear plate.

He finishes.

PARSONS (CONT'D)
(yelling)
We're armed.

Beser, down the tube between the forward and mid-section, hears him. Yells into the cockpit...

INT. B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - SAME TIME

BESER (O.S.)
Armed!

Tibbets and Eatherly turn around. Tibbets swallows, hard.

TIBBETS
(into intercom)
Weather plane. What are you seeing?

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Huge hole in the clouds. Ten miles
across.
(beat)
A perfect day for killing Japs.

A laugh across the radio.

TIBBETS
We're five miles out.

Beser pokes his head into the cockpit.

BESER
Radar pulse sequence.

Eatherly turns with alarm.

EATHERLY
They're locked onto us?

BESER
Yup. Anti-aircraft guns.

EATHERLY

And we have no fucking guns on
board. We're sitting ducks.

He shakes his head.

EATHERLY (CONT'D)

Thank you, Colonel Tibbets.

TIBBETS

Either way, the bomb goes off. If
we get shot down, it'll be
triggered by altitude.

EATHERLY

Except we die too.

TIBBETS

Two miles out.

INT. TINIAN ISLAND - CONTROL ROOM HUT - SAME TIME

Groves stands with several other soldiers, listening to the
above conversation crackle over the radio.

He's mindlessly stuffing his face with chocolate. Using food
to calm his nerves.

INT. HIROSHIMA - APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Natsuko sits next to Akira on the bed as he slowly ties his
shoes.

NATSUKO

Hurry up, Akira.

AKIRA

Why? There's nowhere to go anyway.

NATSUKO

I don't know about you, but I'm not
staying here in this cardboard box
that is not my home.

Akira looks up at her, sees the sadness in her eyes.

AKIRA

Maybe we can find a park?

NATSUKO

Maybe.

AKIRA
Let's bring rice crackers. In case
there are birds.

Natsuko smiles, weakly.

NATSUKO
There are always birds.

EXT. TIBBETS'S B29 PLANE - MOVING - LATER

Tibbets's plane approaches the massive hole in the clouds
above the city.

INT. TIBBETS'S B29 PLANE - BLISTER TURRET - MOMENTS LATER

Ferebee looks through the Norden bomb sight at Hiroshima as
it rushes by below.

FEREBEE
(into intercom)
Permission to begin auto
synchronization sequence?

INT. TIBBETS'S B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - SAME TIME

Tibbets listens to the voice. Suddenly frozen.

FEREBEE (O.S.)
Colonel?

Tibbets looks at the radio. Eatherly watches him.

FEREBEE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I need permission to start the
bombing sequence, Sir.

EATHERLY
(soft)
Tibbets?

INT. TINIAN ISLAND - CONTROL ROOM HUT - SAME TIME

Groves, frowning at Tibbets's silence, leans forward.

INT. TIBBETS'S B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - MOMENTS LATER

Tibbets opens his mouth to say something when the plane is
HIT BY A BARRAGE OF BULLETS AND FLAK FROM BELOW.

It rocks in place. Monitors light up. Tibbets quickly grabs the control wheel.

INT. TIBBETS'S B29 PLANE - BOMB BAY - SAME TIME

Parsons watches with horror as bullets dent the metal of the bomb bay. The bomb remains undisturbed. For now.

INT. TINIAN ISLAND - CONTROL HUT - SAME TIME

The radio suddenly powers down, silencing the chaotic voices. Groves stands, furious. Grabs the radio and throws it against the wall.

GROVES
Get me another fucking radio!

INT. TIBBETS'S B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - MOMENTS LATER

Tibbets struggles to keep the plane aloft as bullets dent the windshield, threatening to shred it entirely.

FEREBEE (O.S.)
Sir, we are running out of time.

Eatherly reaches over to grab the intercom, but Tibbets blocks him. Speaks with authority.

TIBBETS
Begin auto synchronization. Now!

Now he lets Eatherly take it.

EATHERLY
And make it fucking fast. Because we're getting pummelled.

The windshield SPLINTERS.

INT. TIBBETS'S B29 PLANE - BOMB BAY - MOMENTS LATER

Parsons, strapped into a chair, watches the bomb bay doors FLY OPEN. Bullets pour in, narrowly missing him. He takes cover on a catwalk.

The MASSIVE BLACK BOMB detaches like clockwork from its electric console.

The bomb slides off the restraining hook - BUT NOT ALL THE WAY. It remains hanging on. It's caught.

Parsons, thinking quick, unscrews the metal door to a nearby control panel. Then runs toward the restraining hook, using the door as a shield. Bullets rain around him, bouncing off the metal. The bomb is still perched there, buoyed by the wind.

Parsons reaches out, fingers straining, slowly pushes the bomb clutch off the hook. Inch by inch, until...

IT BARRELS OUT into the beautiful dawn sky.

EXT. HIROSHIMA - MORNING

The bomb hurls through the air, moving irregularly due to its oblong shape.

INT. TIBBETS'S B29 PLANE - BLISTER TURRET - MORNING

Ferebee watches through Plexiglas as it tumbles away from them.

INT. TIBBETS'S B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - MORNING

The plane elevates ten feet, suddenly lighter by 9,000 pounds.

Tibbets maneuvers the plane into a 155-degree angle. Guns the throttle.

INT. TIBBETS'S B29 PLANE - TAIL GUN - MORNING

Caron is pushed against the wall of the turret by g-forces from the sharp turn.

EXT. HIROSHIMA - SKY - MORNING

As the bomb plummets towards the ground, it gives off a small puff of smoke.

INSIDE THE BOMB

The core of uranium hurtles toward the sphere of reactor uranium at the tip. Closer. And closer.

INT. HIROSHIMA - APARTMENT - MORNING

Natsuko waits as Akira searches for crackers in his knapsack under the bed. She glances at the clock on the wall. 8:15AM.

NATSUKO
Akira--

Suddenly a blinding FLASH OF WHITE.

In eerie silence, the mattress lifts off the ground, Akira underneath.

For a millisecond, he looks up at his mother, terrified.

The entire room leans backwards, slowly, then suddenly explodes, folding in on itself.

EXT. HIROSHIMA CASTLE - COURTYARD - SAME TIME

The thousands of soldiers performing calisthenics look up as a WHITE FLASH sweeps over them.

All catch fire and EVAPORATE, turning into wisps of steam.

The PILLARS at the front gate of Hiroshima Castle PLUNGE INTO THE GROUND.

The Castle crumbles behind it. Stone blocks MELT. A soaring bird ignites into flames.

INT. HIROSHIMA AIR FORCE BASE - CONTROL STATION - SAME TIME

As Yanami stares at the radar screen, every window behind him SHATTERS.

The glass fragments BLOW FORWARD, instantly skewering and killing WORKERS.

A man standing by the window is LIFTED UP and IMPALED ON a POLE waving the Japanese flag.

Yanami, fortunately positioned between two windows, is spared.

The only other living person in the room stands, holding out his right hand. It's quivering with tiny shards of glass, like a porcupine. A WOODEN BEAM flies through the now open window, killing him.

Yanami flattens himself against the wall to avoid flying debris.

EXT. HIROSHIMA - SKY - MORNING

Above Hiroshima, a WHITE-HOT SPHERE with a diameter of several miles hangs in the sky.

Around it, the air shimmers with intense heat. It's spectral, silent.

And slowly expanding, a bubble about to pop.

Eighty thousand people have already died from the heat and radiation.

INT. B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - MORNING

The cockpit is lit up brilliantly by light from the explosion.

Tibbets, flying the plane away from Hiroshima as fast as he can, can't see any detail of the explosions. Only clouds lie in his view.

TIBBETS
Three miles.

EATHERLY
Shit. That's slower than the simulations.

Tibbets nods, trying to remain calm.

TIBBETS
The bomb is about to reach full radius.

EXT. B29 PLANE - MOVING - SAME TIME

The plane hurtles through the air, chased by the white rim of the explosion.

INT. B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - MORNING

Tibbets, sweating, guns the throttle.

TIBBETS
Come on... Come on...

He leans forward. Tense.

EXT. B29 PLANE - MOVING - SAME TIME

Just as it looks like the plane will be consumed, the explosion suddenly recoils.

The plane breaks away, finally clearing a gap.

INT. B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - MORNING

Tibbets starts breathing again as Eatherly cheers, hoarse and terrified.

Lights flash all around them, then they feel the EXPLOSION.

INT. B29 PLANE - TAIL GUN - MORNING

Caron, pressed into the tail gun, which faces out the back of the plane, stares wide-eyed.

The ball has turned into a fiery red pillar of dust, smoke and fire. Gradually it's overtaken by a massive MUSHROOM SHAPE that shoots up into the sky, far above them. Bigger than the mind can fathom. Bigger than anything you've seen in superhero movies.

CARON

Sir. You have to see this.

A RING OF WIND suddenly expands out of the explosion. A shock-wave. It travels toward Caron at the speed of light. He barely has time to open his mouth before the plane JOLTS UPWARD.

INT. B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - SAME TIME

The plane is rocked by the shock-wave.

Tibbets carefully recovers their position.

EATHERLY

We're free now. That was the last of it.

Tibbets breathes deeply. Closes his eyes. Exhales. Then they burst wide open.

TIBBETS

I'm turning around.

EATHERLY

What?

TIBBETS
I need to see it.

EATHERLY
You told us not to look.

TIBBETS
My father was an asshole. But he
used to say, *You don't shoot a man
in the back.*

EXT. TIBBETS'S B29 PLANE - SKY - MORNING

Tibbets turns the plane around so it hovers before the massive cloud pulsing with color.

Like a mosquito facing a bull.

Tibbets and his crew look up. The cloud seems to never end. It rises 45,000 feet into the air, three miles above them.

As the mushroom continues to expand, the city is briefly revealed below. Burnt. Charred. Decimated. Only a single structure survives -- the dome that will become known as the A-dome.

As flashes of light play across their faces, Tibbets and Eatherly stare, awestruck.

EXT. HIROSHIMA - STREET - MORNING

It's dark. Dust fills the air. Natsuko's apartment building is charred rubble.

The rubble begins to shift as Natsuko slowly inches her way out.

Half her face -- the part of her turned toward the window -- is burnt black, seeping with a pale yellow fluid.

She yells, panicked, for her son. Hears and sees nothing in the whipping, dark dust.

She starts digging through the rubble, freezes when she sees an UNLACED SHOE. Then grabs it, starts pulling.

A MAN - the one in the grey kimono she saw earlier -- appears out of nowhere, begins helping her. He's grabbing his belly with one hand, but uses the other as best he can. The shoe falls off into Natsuko's hands.

INT. HIROSHIMA AIR FORCE BASE - MORNING

Yanami stumbles through the wreckage and devastation.

EXT. HIROSHIMA AIR FORCE BASE - CONTINUOUS

As Yanami steps outside, we see the base is several miles from the heart of the explosion.

From his perspective, he can see the entire city has been leveled. There is no building still standing. He falls to his knees.

A nearby gas tank, superheated, SUDDENLY ROCKETS MILES INTO THE AIR. He watches it rise -- then spots a plane. A black dot in the sky. Miles and miles away. He stares at it, knowing.

EXT. HIROSHIMA - STREET - MORNING

Natsuko and the MAN succeed in pulling out Akira. He's pale, unresponsive. Bleeding profusely from a gash in his head. She looks at her son -- half his head is caved in.

She bursts into tears.

Then scoops him into her arms, holds him against her chest. The man takes her arm with his free one, leads her through the apocalyptic nightmare before them. We see the entire street is missing, erased. The asphalt glows red hot. A pillar of purple and red fire rises from the center of the explosion.

As the dust swirls and clears, slats of sunlight peak in, suddenly illuminating the gruesome scene. They are surrounded by voices crying out from beneath the rubble, more people trapped. Dying.

MAN

We must go to Asano Park. There is a medical station there. They can help your son.

Natsuko nods.

NATSUKO

What happened to your family?

The man doesn't answer. Just leads her firmly with one hand, the other still clutching his belly.

Natsuko stares wide-eyed as they pass:

A teenage girl, shuffling slowly, her hair on fire.

A man with MELTED eyes, PUS LEAKING DOWN HIS FACE. He looked directly at the bomb.

A pink horse quivers, strips of flesh hang off it, a common effect of radiation. It's scared and dying. It whines pitifully. A cat, hair frayed, licks the pink flesh, curious.

Two men carry a PORTRAIT OF THE EMPEROR. Others bow and salute it, some yelling out scattered entreaties, others praying in silence.

An OLD MAN being carried by TWO WOMEN screams out. They release him. He gestures for them to continue onward. When they do, reluctantly, he gets up and runs back into a FLAMING HOUSE.

Teenage girls trapped underneath a massive concrete barricade SING the national anthem. Their voices trembling.

Piles and piles of bodies. Struck dead where they stood when the bomb flashed. Charred, mutilated. Many we recognize from the previous street scene.

BLACK DROPS BEGIN TO FALL. The size of marbles. The rain as thick as oil. Natsuko strains under the weight of her son, her hair matted.

Suddenly the man PULLS HER TO THE GROUND. A wind carrying panes of glass, eerily preserved, sweeps past where she stood only moments before.

She gets up. The man remains on the ground. The hand clutching his belly falls away. A long coil of bowel hangs out, glistening in the spare light. He smiles beatifully, then goes limp.

Natsuko screams, horrified, as she watches him die.

She backs away... then starts running. Akira bounces lifelessly in her arms, his blood covering her clothes.

EXT. HIROSHIMA AIR FORCE BASE - MORNING

Yanami walks past dead bodies scattered across the runways. He sees a SOLDIER, black and bleeding. But still alive.

He shouts in Japanese at him. We don't understand the words. But he's pointing at one of the planes, then up at the sky.

The soldier, nodding, stumbles toward the nearby plane. It's a small fighter. Bent like a banana. All the glass blown out. Tail twisted. Nose bent.

Yanami continues to yell. The soldier struggles into the cockpit. Presses the starter button.

It somehow fires to life.

EXT. HIROSHIMA - RIVER - MORNING

Natsuko stumbles, still carrying Akira, toward the bank of a river, one of the seven shallow tributaries that course through Hiroshima.

A sign that reads ASANO PARK is submerged into the silt of the opposite bank. She can't make out whether the park has survived the devastation -- she can only see a few feet in front of her with the blowing dust and rain -- but she pushes blindly forward, wading into the river.

It quickly comes up to her neck. She struggles, gasping for breath, pushes Akira's head above the water. His face is now blue.

Her arms suddenly give way, and Akira is swept out of her grasp. The wind pushes his floating body down the river. She screams, fighting the wind and the flow to reach him.

She struggles, until finally, her outstretched hand is within inches of his. He's being sucked into the current, but she manages to grip his hand tightly, pulling him back to her.

Then, to her horror, the skin of his entire hand comes off in hers -- like a glove being pulled off.

A final gust of wind propels his body away from her.

She tries again to reach him, but...

A CYCLONE is building in the east, whipping towards her. The wind is laced with FIRE.

EXT. HIROSHIMA AIR FORCE BASE - MORNING

Yanami stands at the base of the runway, screaming.

INT. JAPANESE PLANE - MORNING

The soldier, terrified, maneuvers the airplane slowly down the runway. Wind rushes into the open cockpit.

He passes blackened and burnt men walking aimlessly on the tarmac.

The plane rises three feet into the air, then crashes back onto the asphalt.

The soldier BELLOWS into the wind, his hand on the accelerator.

He yanks on the control wheel. The plane lifts into the air.

EXT. HIROSHIMA - RIVER - MORNING

As the wind-fire approaches, Natsuko DIVES underwater.

Just as she does, a bright orange light skims the surface.

She bursts up after it passes. Spots her son, floating on the aft side of a small wooden boat. He's face up. The boat protected him from the fire. It looks like he's sleeping.

She reaches him, grabs him around the waist, then, using her free hand, tries to lift herself onto the boat. It threatens to capsize.

Finally, she clammers onboard. Pulls her son into her arms.

She looks around. The boat is crowded with corpses, blistered and bloated like Slotin. Frozen in poses from their time of death. All of them looking up at something in the sky. A strange tableau.

Ignoring them, Natsuko tries paddling the boat forward with her hand. It turns in useless circles.

A long stalk of BAMBOO floats by. She grabs it. Uses it as a punt, driving it into the soil below to push the boat forward.

INT. TIBBETS'S B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - MORNING

Tibbets continues to stare, transfixed.

EATHERLY

Let's get the fuck out of here.

His hands are shaking.

TIBBETS

One more minute.

BESER (O.S.)
We've got something coming towards
us.

EXT. HIROSHIMA - SKY - MORNING

Below them, the Japanese soldier in his mangled plane is flying higher and higher.

INT. JAPANESE PLANE - SAME TIME

The soldier spots the massive B29 hovering above.

With a SCREAM, he aims and activates his guns. But they're bent, useless. Nothing fires.

The engine sputters. The last puff of endurance from the little aircraft is beginning to dissipate.

INT. TIBBETS'S B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - MORNING

Tibbets looks out at the tiny Japanese plane, falling from the sky.

He locks eyes with the pilot, as in his flashback.

EATHERLY
Let's go--

TIBBETS
He's done.

The Japanese plane is suddenly sucked into the massive cloud of dust and fire.

INT. JAPANESE PLANE - MORNING

The soldier coughs as the aircraft fills with black soot. He struggles to stay upright. Then the little plane is consumed by fire.

INT. TIBBETS'S B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - MORNING

Tibbets watches quietly.

TIBBETS
It's time to go.

He turns the plane, slowly.

EXT. HIROSHIMA - RIVER BANK - MORNING

The boat lands in the bank close to Asano Park.

Natsuko lifts her son, stumbles over a charred tree sprawled across the darkened water. She sees a group of injured taking shelter beneath a collapsed bridge.

EXT. HIROSHIMA - ASANO PARK - MORNING

Natsuko walks into Asano Park. Designed as a leisure spot for the rich -- small pools and eddies, moon bridges -- and largely preserved from the devastation of the bomb by the stone house that shelters it.

There are crowds of people, burnt and injured like herself. Many vomiting as radiation poisoning sets in.

A woman lies sprawled on the moon bridge, facing towards the sky. It's unclear if she's dead or alive.

A man in a white coat sits wearily in front of a long line of injured. A small black bag beside him.

Natsuko rushes forward with her son, bypassing the line.

NATSUKO
Please, please, my son.

She lays Akira on the grass. The doctor looks at him with stone eyes.

DOCTOR
He's dead. Only the wounded.

NATSUKO
No! That's not true!

She drops to the ground, touching her son's face, cradling him. He's completely still. In complete shock, she runs her hands through her hair - the hair falls away, like it was never attached to her scalp. There's hair everywhere, falling off everyone - another effect of radiation.

A NURSE in tattered white clothes pulls her away, wrapping her in a blanket. Natsuko holds onto Akira. Won't let go as the nurse tries to gently pry him out of her arms.

NURSE
Some water.

She passes a flask with a long hollowed grass straw.

Instead of taking a sip, Natsuko puts the stem inside her son's mouth.

NATSUKO
Drink, Akira. Drink.

The nurse lets Natsuko be, respectful of her grief.

EXT. HIROSHIMA AIR FORCE BASE - MORNING

Yanami watches as the B29 races away, far above him.

He curses the sky.

EXT. HIROSHIMA - ASANO PARK - MORNING

Natsuko, still holding her son, looks up. There's a commotion at the entrance to the park.

An AMERICAN PRISONER OF WAR - a fugitive from one of the destroyed prisons -- stumbles towards them. He's badly burnt, but still moving.

AMERICAN POW
Peace. I come in peace. I'm... I'm
injured.

He doesn't know Japanese, but tries to communicate his good intentions with gestures.

He collapses near the end of the line of wounded.

Several of the Japanese stand. They pick up stones, fallen debris, long bamboo poles.

Natsuko, understanding, carefully lays Akira on the ground, covering him with the blanket.

Despite their injuries, the others begin to stone the American POW, yelling epithets and insults.

Natsuko watches at first. Then picks up a large stone, is about to HURL IT when her eyes meet his. They are frozen in a shared moment of horror and despair. She clenches the stone tightly, then drops it on the ground. As if the future of humanity depended on it.

A STONE from the woman next to her lands on the POW's face, cracking it open.

INT. TIBBETS'S B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - MORNING

The plane rushes toward Tinian. Bleary-eyed, Tibbets looks at Eatherly, who is still stunned, oddly quiet.

TIBBETS
Take my place.

Eatherly looks at him, questioning.

Eatherly takes over as he clammers back into the forward and mid-sections, passing Beser, who says nothing.

Then he maneuvers feet-first into the 30-foot long tube that connects the mid-section and tail gun. Lies in the tight cocoon, with a diameter of only 20 inches. And promptly falls asleep for the first time in thirty hours.

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. TIBBETS'S B29 PLANE - MIDSECTION / COCKPIT - MORNING

Hands tug on Tibbets's feet, which stick out into the mid-section.

BESER
Wake up, Sir.

Tibbets's eyes open.

An orange rolls down the tube above his head.

PARSONS (O.S.)
Breakfast.

EXT. TINIAN ISLAND - AIR BASE - DAY

The aircraft lands on the B29 runway where a massive welcoming party awaits.

Groves stands at the head of the crowd, bursting with pride.

INT. TINIAN ISLAND - MESS HALL / HUT - DAY

The mess hall is crowded with soldiers and attractive nurses from the island hospital.

There is lemonade, beer, hot dogs, cold cuts, potato salad. More food than the soldiers have seen in four years. People are dancing, hugging each other, celebrating.

Tibbets makes his way to a table labeled "PIE EATING CONTEST." He watches as Eatherly and Lewis scarf down apple pie with their hands tied behind their back.

Eatherly finishes first and looks up, pie filling dripping down his face.

He whoops it up, celebrating his victory. His expression bordering on psychotic. Like a screw has just come loose.

EATHERLY
I win! I fucking win!
(beat)
Who's next?

Tibbets catches his gaze, sees the pain behind the mania.

INT. TINIAN ISLAND - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Hours later. Eatherly lies in a hospital bed, vomiting into a bedpan. His skin is a pale yellow. A doctor looks between him and Tibbets, sitting slumped in a nearby chair.

DOCTOR
I'm worried about him. He drank so much his liver shut down.

Tibbets nods.

Eatherly starts laughing. It's crazed.

EATHERLY
Doctor... we killed a thousand... a hundred million... Japs today.
(to Tibbets)
Did you already tell him that?

Tibbets doesn't respond. Eatherly's expression rapidly cycles. He now looks deeply morose.

EATHERLY (CONT'D)
Their little black Jap heads.

Then he starts laughing again.

EATHERLY (CONT'D)
We looked Hell right in the face.
It's purple. Hell is purple.
Orange. Red.

TIBBETS
Thank you, Doctor.

The doctor nods, exits. Eatherly grabs Tibbets's arm.

EATHERLY

How do you... do the math? Groves says we killed a hundred thousand. Pearl was 2500. But the war-- that's millions of theirs. And millions of ours. So who's beating who?

And then he starts sobbing like a child. He curls up into a fetal position. Looks to Tibbets, desperate for comfort.

But Tibbets backs away.

TIBBETS

Pull yourself together.

Eatherly looks hurt, alone in his pain and confusion.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)

They deserved it. You said so yourself.

EATHERLY

Does anyone deserve that?

Tibbets stares at him.

TIBBETS

You think we just bombed a bunch of saints?

EATHERLY

I know we were too far away-- but I see their faces. I do. I see them.

TIBBETS

No. You don't.

Tibbets is nearly shouting now.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)

All you saw was a fucking cloud.

INT. USS AUGUSTA - MESS HALL - DAY

Truman dines with sailors on the USS Augusta, at sea on his way home from the Potsdam Conference.

Stimson approaches, whispers something in his ear.

The president immediately taps his glass to get the room's attention. Stands.

TRUMAN
I'm about to tell you the greatest thing in history.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - TIBBETS FOYER - DAY

Lucy opens the front door. Sees the *New York Times* lying on the porch.

The front page stares up at her. "FIRST ATOMIC BOMB DROPPED ON JAPAN. MISSILE EQUAL TO 20,000 TONS OF TNT. TRUMAN WARNS FOE OF A 'RAIN OF RUIN.'

She just stares back. Then, slowly, picks it up. As she reads, an actual Truman radio recording plays...

TRUMAN (V.O.)
The Japanese have seen what our atomic bomb can do. They can foresee what it will do in the future.

EXT. TINIAN ISLAND - RUNWAY - MORNING

Tibbets's plane takes off. Returning home.

INT. TIBBETS'S B29 PLANE - COCKPIT - MORNING

Tibbets looks at the slowly shrinking piece of land in the vast blue Pacific.

TRUMAN (V.O.)
We have used the bomb against those who attacked us without warning at Pearl Harbor...

INT. TOKYO - KIDO'S HOUSE - MORNING

Back in Tokyo. Kido holds a rice ball between chopsticks for his wife.

She turns away, won't eat anything. Her burn is violent red.

TRUMAN (V.O.)
... against those who starved, tortured and executed American prisoners of war.

REVERSE TO SEE:

She's looking at her son's ORIGAMI SWAN. On the other end of the table, where Kido left it.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - BASE - EVENING

The plane idles on the runway. The crew emerges, greets their spouses, friends and family members.

Tibbets looks for Lucy and Mary. They're not there.

TRUMAN (V.O.)

We have used it in order to shorten
the agony of war, in order to save
the lives of thousands and
thousands of young Americans.

Tibbets finds Dora.

She just looks at him. Shakes her head.

DORA

With her sister. In Colorado.

INT. LOS ALAMOS - TIBBETS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tibbets, alone, listens to the radio.

TRUMAN (V.O.)

Only a Japanese surrender will stop
us.

He turns it off, unsettled. Looks around the empty house.

EXT. COLORADO SPRINGS - SISTER'S HOUSE - MORNING

Tibbets, now in civilian clothes, hat in hand, walks up to a small bungalow. Knocks on the door.

LUCY'S SISTER answers.

SISTER

She doesn't want to see you.

She closes the door in his face.

He stands there a moment. Looks at the front bay windows, the curtains closed.

INT. COLORADO SPRINGS AIR FORCE BASE - TIBBETS HOUSE - NIGHT

Tibbets is back in his old Colorado Springs housing unit, where we began. Mary and Lucy's belongings still there.

His sleeves rolled up, he sits with the phone to his ear. Willing Lucy to answer. She doesn't.

A KNOCK. His eyes start open. He quickly moves to the door, opens it.

Lucy is there. With Mary.

Mary, shrieking, runs into her father's arms. He hugs her tightly.

Lucy hands Mary her flowered knapsack.

LUCY

Why don't you go to your bedroom and unpack. Okay, sweetheart?

She nods, runs off, dragging her bag.

LUCY (CONT'D)

You can have her for the weekend.

TIBBETS

Lucy--

LUCY

Don't say a word to her. She doesn't know. I hope she never finds out.

TIBBETS

This is my job. You knew that when you married me.

LUCY

I didn't give up my career for this.

TIBBETS

What do you want me to do, Luce?

She stares, studying his face.

LUCY

Tell me you feel guilty. Tell me you feel something.

TIBBETS

I cross the ocean. Risk my life to stop this godforsaken war. And come home to an empty house. So what I'm feeling right now is that I don't deserve this.

LUCY

Jesus, you don't even know what feelings are, do you? Those are thoughts.

(beat)

We can fix this, Tibby. I just need to see you cry.

TIBBETS

(softly)

You're going to be waiting a long time.

She shakes her head, walks out.

INT. TOKYO - IMPERIAL WAR ROOM - DAY

The Emperor sits on his dais at the head of the table.

SUPER: "August 9, 1945"

His advisors are seated around the table, as before. Yanami is conspicuously absent. Another Admiral, TOJO, is giving updates.

TOJO

... and we're still investigating reports of more explosions in Hiroshima and... this morning, Nagasaki.

Kido is frozen, as if he's been hit in the gut.

TOJO (CONT'D)

We're not certain the damage is as extensive as reported in international newspapers. We obviously know papers lie.

The other advisors nod agreement.

TOJO (CONT'D)

Our country still has millions and millions ready to fight until the very end. Until... if necessary...

(MORE)

TOJO (CONT'D)
our nation is destroyed like a
beautiful flower!

The men murmur their agreement again.

The Emperor looks to Kido, but he says nothing. He's lost the will to fight. The Emperor's appointed Voice is silent.

Finally, the Emperor bangs his fist against the table. A sudden, violent gesture from a usually implacable presence.

EMPEROR
ENOUGH.

He takes a deep breath. Reaches out and takes the hands of his advisors. Like a father comforting his children.

EMPEROR (CONT'D)
(softly now)
Enough.

INT. COLORADO SPRINGS AIR FORCE BASE - CAMP STORE - EVENING

Tibbets wanders around the commissary of his old base. Sees a display of toy planes, stacked nearly to the ceiling. He smiles.

Suddenly a woman CRIES OUT. She's listening to the RADIO. She starts sobbing.

Others look at her, alarmed.

WOMAN
Truman... oh my God... he just said
the Japanese... they surrendered.
It's over.

EXT. COLORADO SPRINGS AIR FORCE BASE - DAY

Tibbets drives his car through the base, exploding with the news.

Air-raid sirens are screaming. The base church is ringing its bell. People are running into the streets and leaning out windows, cheering and yelling. A man rips pages from his phone book into shreds and tosses the confetti into the air.

An older woman sitting on a stoop hugs her neighbor.

Tibbets suddenly LEANS on his HORN, provoking a rousing cheer from pedestrians on the sidewalk.

He cranks down the window, puts his hand out, touching dozens of other hands as he drives slowly past. His face, at one moment blissful, the next broken. He CHEERS himself hoarse.

Three years and eight months of war. All the bullets and bombs. Sweat and nightmares.

EXT. COLORADO SPRINGS - SUBURB - DAY

Even the suburban streets are gridlocked. Tibbets gets out of his car, abandoning it by the side of the road. He walks quickly through the madness. Starts running toward the bungalow where Lucy's sister lives.

EXT. COLORADO SPRINGS - FRONT PORCH - DAY

Tibbets knocks on the door. Lucy's sister opens it, grimaces.

LUCY'S SISTER
It's not a good time.

She starts to close it, when Lucy appears, looks out at him.

LUCY
(to her sister)
It's okay.

She gives Lucy a look, walks away.

Lucy looks at Tibbets. He's worked up, sweating, charged with energy.

TIBBETS
We used to talk about all the things we'd do. When it ended. Remember?

He reaches for her hand. She pulls it away.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)
Look around. Everybody's celebrating.

LUCY
Because they don't know yet.

TIBBETS
Everyone agreed it was the right thing. It would save lives. FDR, Truman, Groves--

LUCY

They agreed on the numbers. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm asking what kind of man can drop a bomb that burns women and children alive and not blink.

She looks him in the eye, searching. He doesn't answer.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Give me something. Anything.

He trembles, silent. She shakes her head, closes the door.

Then, quietly, hoping she's on the other side, listening...

TIBBETS

Luce. I got through this because I knew you were there. Waiting. At the end of all the darkness. I need you--

Nothing.

INT. TIBBETS HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tibbets is alone. An untouched meal on the table. He opens the small window, hears the SOUND of the world celebrating. He listens, listless. Tries to cry. He can't. Nothing comes.

INT. LUCY'S SISTER HOUSE - BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Mary, in pajamas, is dropping corn nuts over the side of her toy plane, one by one, yelling...

MARY

Kaboom! Kaboom!

Lucy enters, holding a glass of water.

MARY (CONT'D)

Look, Mommy. I'm killing Japs!

Lucy abruptly grabs the toy plane out of Mary's hands. She starts screaming, banging her fists against her mother.

MARY (CONT'D)

Give it back. It's mine!

LUCY

Only if you promise not to drop bombs. That's not what it's for.

MARY
YES IT IS! WHERE'S DADDY? I WANT MY
DADDY!

Lucy kneels down, hugs her daughter tightly.

INT. TIBBETS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

A knock on the front door.

Tibbets runs for it, still in his bathrobe.

TIBBETS
Lucy?

Opens the door and sees A REPORTER with slicked-back hair on his doorstep.

REPORTER
Aaron McGill from the Post. Just a few questions, Colonel, won't take more than a few minutes--

TIBBETS
I'm busy, sorry---

REPORTER
We're doing a special report--

TIBBETS
You should talk to General Groves--

REPORTER
Just one question, then.

Tibbets sighs.

REPORTER (CONT'D)
Do you think you should be tried as a war criminal?

Tibbets stares at him. Slams the door in his face.

INT. BASE - AUDITORIUM - EVENING

Groves and Major General TIMOTHY SPATZ pin a medal to Tibbets's uniformed chest in front of a rowdy crowd of SOLDIERS.

GROVES

The Distinguished Service Cross.
 For the man who ended the war. Paul
 W. Tibbets. A national hero.

He and Spatz hold up each of Tibbets's arms. He smiles as cameras flash. The smile is weak.

GROVES (CONT'D)
 (whispering to Tibbets)
 A few words. Upbeat. A final rah-rah, then we can all go home.

Tibbets nods, steps up to the podium. Takes off his cap, places it on the stand. Then looks out at the men, tired and dirty.

A long beat before he speaks.

TIBBETS

You're going to hear a lot about the bomb. What it was, what it meant, whether we should have dropped it. There will be a lot of talking. Speculating. Everyone will have an opinion. Sitting on their lounge chairs, smoking their cigarettes, thinking they would have done it differently. Or just better. But they don't know a damn thing about it. They want us to feel guilty, immoral, tortured by nightmares.

Tibbets look into the eyes of the men in front of him.

TIBBETS (CONT'D)
 Here's what I know. People were dying. Lots of people. We put an end to it. Every red-blooded American would have pulled that trigger if they'd had the chance, if they knew exactly what was at stake, if they saw all we've seen.

(beat)

This had to end. This long miserable war had to end.

The audience roars. Tibbets looks at Groves, who nods, grateful.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. AIRPORT - MORNING

A passenger plane touches down.

It taxis up to the gate. As passengers walk out, most of them Japanese, we see Tibbets. A passenger too.

SUPER: "Hiroshima Airport. February 1946."

The AMERICAN FLAG hangs from a nearby pole.

Tibbets stops, salutes it.

EXT. HIROSHIMA - STREET - MORNING

Tibbets, wearing civilian clothes, walks through the streets of Hiroshima. Only slightly restored from the devastation.

He's accompanied by a crew of scientists, including Oppenheimer, and a JAPANESE INTERPRETER.

The scientists carry Geiger counters, electrosopes. Measuring radiation levels. They stop to collect samples in plastic bags.

OPPENHEIMER
I didn't think you'd come.

TIBBETS
Why wouldn't I?

He shrugs.

OPPENHEIMER
Because nobody else did.

As they walk, Tibbets studies the people passing by, heads bowed, not daring to make eye contact. Many have red spots on their skin. Hair falling out in patches. They are all gaunt and pale.

A young woman with a severely disfigured face has the pattern of a kimono (flowers and birds) burnt into her bare arm. Her eyes are cloudy with radiation-induced cataracts.

He can't look away.

TIBBETS
Good morning.

She bows her head, keeps walking.

EXT. HIROSHIMA - STREET - LATER

Tibbets, Oppenheimer and the scientists stare at a stone wall.

Much of the wall has melted away. The part that remains is emblazoned with the BLACK SHADOW of a man cowering, looking up at the sky.

OPPENHEIMER

The bomb burned his shadow into the wall. The man probably evaporated on the spot. It's all that's left of him.

EXT. HIROSHIMA - STREET - LATER

Tibbets looks through bric-a-brac piled on an overturned cart. An eager vendor tries to interest him in various items. Most salvaged from the ruins.

Tibbets holds up a hand-lacquered and carved rice bowl.

TIBBETS

I'll take the bowl.

The interpreter passes on the message to the vendor, who grins while pushing other wares in his direction.

As he fishes in his pocket for Japanese currency, Tibbets notices a rusty clock on the cart. He picks it up. It reads: 8:15 AM.

INTERPRETER

The *pika*. It froze many of the clocks at the time of the explosion. In my house, the same.

Tibbets checks his watch, then corrects the time. Puts it back.

He notices another clock. It also reads: 8:15 AM. He does the same to that one.

TIBBETS

There you go.

He smiles, as if he made it all better.

EXT. HIROSHIMA - ASANO PARK - LATER

They enter the park where Natsuko took shelter.

There is now green vegetation EVERYWHERE. Growing in the gutters, the tiles, tin roofing, across fallen and dead tree trunks.

The peaceful sanctuary is returning to life.

Tibbets kneels next to Oppenheimer, who crouches close to the moon bridge. Inspecting a flowering plant poking through the cement.

OPPENHEIMER

The oleander is the official flower
of the city of Hiroshima now.
Because it was the first to bloom
after the bomb.

Tibbets takes the flower tenderly by its stem.

OPPENHEIMER (CONT'D)

It's poisonous.

Carefully cradles it in his hand.

INT. HIROSHIMA - A-DOME - MORNING

Tibbets walks down a vast, dusty hallway.

At the end is a man who sits inside a kind of governmental kiosk. On a table in front of him is a STACK of ENVELOPES.

The interpreter leans in.

INTERPRETER

They cremated all the bodies. Put
them in envelopes for loved ones to
retrieve.

Tibbets watches as the attendant carefully pours ASHES from a metal urn into yet another envelope. Labels it. Licks it shut.

Tibbets stares, an unfamiliar feeling overtaking him.

Oppie and the other men turn back.

Tibbets, alone, begins to sob. At first softly, then uncontrollably.

END OF MOVIE

OVER VARIOUS SHOTS OF MODERN DAY HIROSHIMA, INCLUDING THE FLAME OF PEACE.

41 million people died in World War II.

One modern atomic missile is equivalent to 84 Hiroshima's.

Paul Tibbets became the executive of a private jet company. He died in 2007.

Claude Eatherly became a prominent anti-bomb activist. He died in 1978.

Marquis Kido claimed all responsibility for war aggression in Japan, thereby absolving the Emperor of guilt. He was prosecuted as a war criminal, and imprisoned in the Sugamo Prison in Tokyo.

Emperor Hirohito reigned until his death in 1989.

The Flame of Peace in Hiroshima has burned since 1964 in honor of the victims and will be extinguished only when the Earth is free from nuclear threat